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ABSTRACT

These materials are designed to help students bridge the gaps in the news and their textbooks about the country of Haiti and to provide suggestions for further research. The following framework is suggested for studying Haiti today: (1) Haiti's current crisis is best understood in historical perspective; (2) the U.S. government has heavily influenced Haitian society in the 20th century; (3) racism has been an important factor in shaping United States/Haitian relations; (4) popular movements play a crucial role in Haiti; (5) President Aristide should be presented in his social context; and (6) a key concern is the role of the Haitian people in determining their country's policies. The volume contains: (1) "Haiti's History"; (2) "Maps"; (3) "Studying the Media"; (4) "Roots of Poverty"; (5) "Aristide"; (6) "Roots of Democracy"; (7) "Haitian Voices"; (8) "The Konbit"; (9) "Folktales"; (10) "Vodou"; (11) "Songs of Resistance"; (12) "Teaching/Action Ideas"; (13) "Resource Guide"; and (14) "Proverbs." (EH)

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Teaching About HAITI

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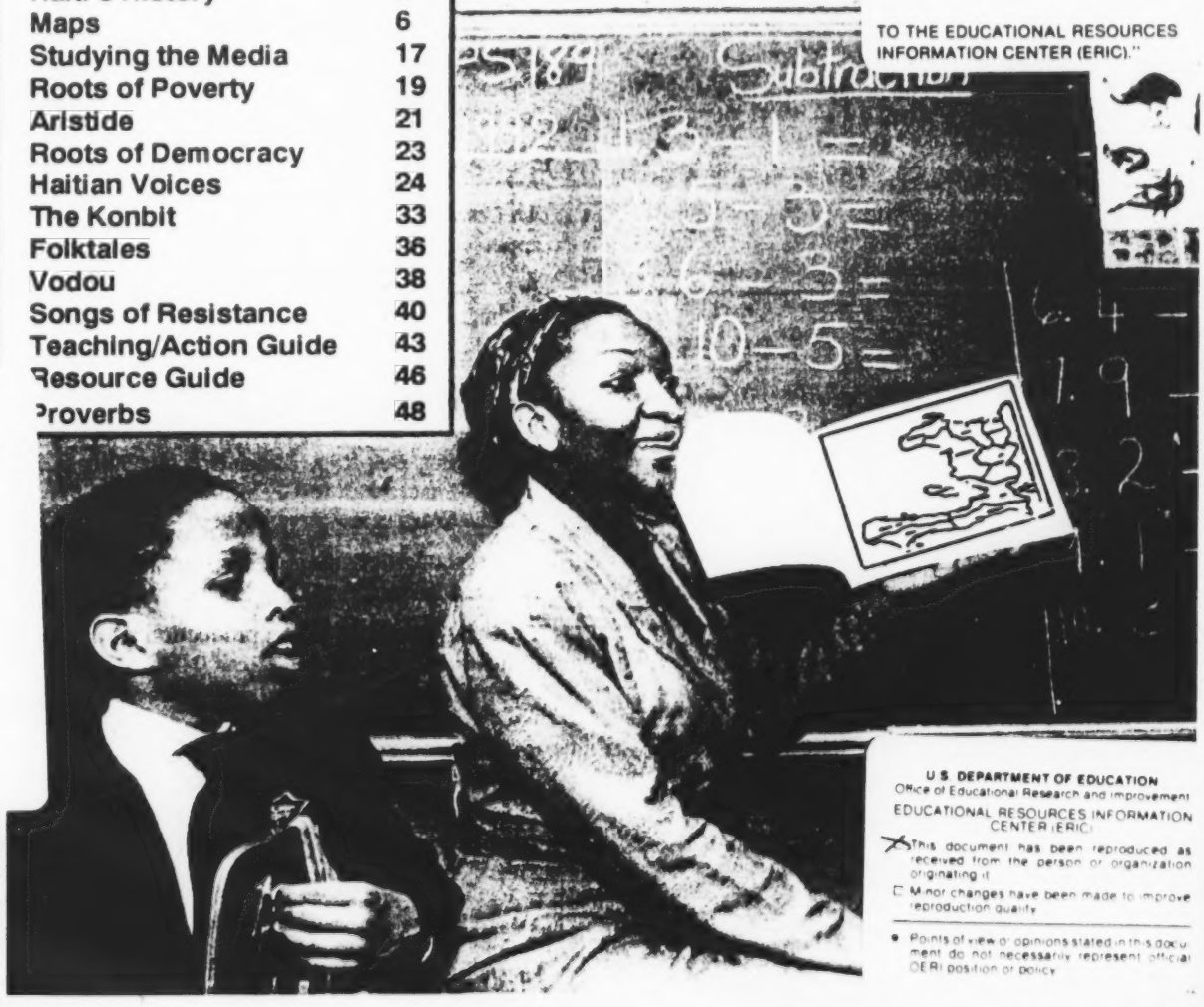

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Teaching About Haiti

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Knowing how to read and write is one step toward knowledge.
From the *Goute Sèl/Taste of Salt* Mission Alpha Literacy Primer, 1986.

Introduction

Debates about U.S. involvement in Haiti are spilling off the front page of the newspaper into the classroom. Students favoring intervention argue we should be involved given the harsh political and economic conditions in Haiti. Those opposed counter that with the increasing poverty and unemployment in the United States, we can't take care of everybody. Multicultural lessons on respect for all races and cultures are undermined by these positions. Even though they might be well-meaning, both sides of the debate paint a "deficit" picture of the Haitian people and a good, powerful picture of the United States. It seems to go without question that the U.S.—the white knight in shining armor—can charge to the rescue. The only difference is whether it should.

The mainstream press and textbooks do little to help the students place the current crisis in historical or even contemporary context. For example, as is documented in *Studying the Media* (p. 17), the historical role of the United States is largely absent. This is no small omission since the history of Haiti has literally been shaped by the United States in the 20th century. Nor do we learn about the strength of the organized Haitian popular movement or Haitian culture.

Teaching About Haiti is designed to help students fill in the gaps in the news and their textbooks and to provide suggestions for further research. The following is a suggested framework for studying events in Haiti today:

(1) Haiti's current crisis is best understood in historical perspective. Students can explore the forces which made Haiti the poorest country in the western hemisphere. Absent any critical analysis, students may agree with U.S. Agency for International Development (AID) official Lawrence Harrison's (*Atlantic Monthly*, 1993) statement that, "culture is the only possible explanation for Haiti's unending tragedy."

History provides other explanations. Prior to the European conquest of Haiti, the Taíno Indians practiced a diversified agriculture that provided food for all and was ecologically sound. African farming practices in Haiti, such as *Konbit* (p. 33) promote cooperation over competition. Students can compare these socio-economic systems to the dominant socio-economic order established how shortly after the conquest *Haiti's History* (p. 5) in which (a) power was concentrated in the hands of a small, wealthy elite, (b) land and people were used, at any expense, to provide that wealth, and (c) Haiti became dependent on foreign powers for trade. In *Roots of Poverty* (p. 19), we see how the products of trade have changed, but the basic power relationships remain the same.

(2) The U.S. government has heavily influenced Haitian society in the twentieth century. This crucial fact is often left out of textbook and media accounts. For example the United States wrote a constitution for Haiti that included articles favorable for U.S. business; established, trained and financed the Haitian National Guard (precursor of the current Haitian military); trained many current military leaders; and provided financial and political support for Haiti's dictators for decades. Nor do we learn about the active opposition by Black organizations, the peace movement, and church groups to the U.S. occupation of Haiti from 1915-34.

(3) Racism has been an important factor in shaping US/Haitian relations. According to a recent study of major U.S. history textbooks by University of Vermont professor James Loewen, not a single page suggests a relationship between racism and foreign policy. Using Haiti as an example, students can analyze to what extent racism has both influenced U.S. government foreign policy and how racism has been used to justify that policy to the American people. Refer to *Haiti's History* (p. 5), *Studying the Media* (p. 17), and the *Resource Guide* (p.46).

(4) Popular movements play a crucial role in Haiti. Judging from the media, the only action the Haitian people take in their defense is to build rafts. Absent is any discussion of the powerful mass organization that elected Jean-Bertrand Aristide or the peasant organizations that continue to work despite brutal repression since the coup. The predominance of stories of the evil military or alternatively the suffering people leads students to say, "Why do we have to learn about this? It is so depressing." The solution is not to ignore the topic, but to include the Haitian stories which inject hope into a discouraging reality.

Haiti's history is a full of stories of people who have challenged the repressive government in every way imaginable. In *Haitian Voices* radio station operator Marie Yollete Val (p. 32) tells how military officers would come each week to broadcast their speeches. Unbeknownst to them she would turn their voices down and play music. Anit (p. 28) tells how she hid a pig to feed her family in defiance of the U.S. ordered slaughter of the entire Haitian pig population. In *Haiti's History* (p. 5), we learn how thousands of people participated in a movement called Lavalas (the flood) to wash away the corruption of the past governments. They successfully elected their own candidate, Aristide.

These stories of powerful, ordinary people allow us to introduce a truly multicultural curriculum, a curriculum that goes beyond the heroes, food and holidays.

In addition to the sections mentioned above, students can refer to the sections on popular movements (*Roots of Democracy*, p. 23), collective farming (*Konbit*, p. 33), songs of resistance (*Boukman Eksperyans*, p. 40), and the community traditions of Vodou (*Vodou*, p. 38). The *Folktales* (p. 36) contain lessons for children about using their intelligence to challenge an adversary.

(5) President Aristide should be presented in his social context. Too often, the media focus on Aristide as an individual. Aristide came to power as a result of a popular movement. He was elected with an extraordinarily high percentage of the vote. The important changes made during his seven months in office were the result of an active collaboration between his administration and the Haitian people.

Frequently missing from the debate are the social policies he was elected to implement. These policies include an increase in the minimum wage, reform of the army, crack down on drug-running, and support for local development projects. It's vital that students know about this broader platform if they are to think critically about the prospects for genuine reform in Haiti.

(6) A key concern is the role of the Haitian people in determining their country's policies. Issues such as amnesty, economic plans and political leadership are being negotiated with minimal consultation with the Haitian people or their elected representatives.

A key question for students to examine regarding the future of Haiti is how and where decisions are being made. For example, in 1993, the Council on Hemispheric Affairs reported that U.S. special envoy Lawrence Pezzulo wanted to keep Aristide "on a short tether" and "insists that Aristide must enter into a power-sharing relationship with the military and his political enemies by broadening his cabinet." Whose president is he? In addition, the role of AID, the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) merit close attention. These agencies receive little mention in the U.S. press but play a pivotal role not just in Haiti but throughout the Caribbean.

▼▼▼

With this research under their belts, students can critically analyze their textbooks and the media. Refer to *Teaching/Action Ideas* (p. 43), and *Studying the Media* (p. 17) for suggested approaches.

Teaching About Haiti is designed to help students not only become more informed about Haiti, but also to become involved. The *Teaching/Action Ideas* suggests ways students can share what they have learned in the school and the community. Students can not only enter the debate, but also help to reframe it.

We hope that **Teaching About Haiti** helps you and your students push beyond the traditional boundaries of inquiry into Haiti by bringing the voices and history of Haiti into your classroom. We welcome your comments.

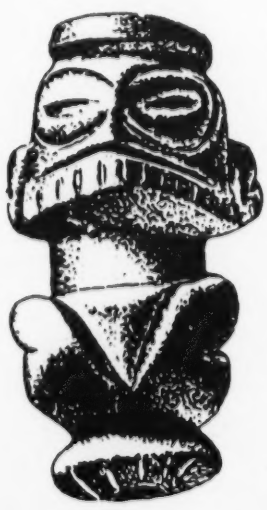
Haiti's History

Once a land in which all its inhabitants were well-fed, Haiti is now the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere. One out of eight children die before the age of five. Life expectancy is 56 years. Human rights abuses against those who criticize the government are unimaginably cruel. Why are people suffering? How are the people of Haiti trying to change these conditions? How can we help? Haiti's history of colonialism, neo-colonialism and the struggles for independence can help you to explore these questions.

Haiti and its next-door neighbor, the Dominican Republic, share the second-largest island in the Caribbean. Before the arrival of the Europeans, the island was a homeland of the Taíno Arawak, a native people originally from South America. They called it Ayiti, or "mountainous land."

The Taínos

Ayiti, also called Quisqueya, was a center of Taíno Arawak culture in the Caribbean. It was divided into five main *cacicasgos* or kinship nations. The Taínos lived in small villages along coastal areas and river deltas. Each village was governed by a *cacique*, or chief, who could be a man or woman.



The Taínos' food came from hunting, fishing and agriculture, and the population was well-fed. Everyone in the society worked, even the *caciques*. Cooperation and sharing were basic to the Taínos' way of life. Each village had a central plaza called a *batey*, used for festivals, ball games, and religious ceremonies.

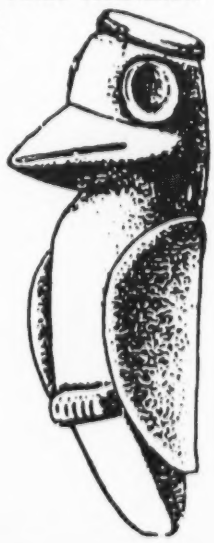
If you had visited Ayiti just prior to the Spanish conquest, you would have seen a lush and fertile land. The island was covered with forests teeming with plant and animal life. There were so many birds that flocks flying overhead would darken the sun.

The Conquest

Columbus landed on Ayiti in 1492 and claimed the island for Spain. He renamed it *La Isla Española* (Hispaniola). It became the first Spanish settlement in the Americas.

Columbus and his sailors hoped to profit from their "discovery." They mistakenly believed gold could be found in abundance on the island. The settlers forced the Taínos to labor in unproductive gold mines, and massacred them when they tried to resist. The persecution of the Taínos was cruel in the extreme. A Spanish priest who accompanied Columbus, Bartolomé de las Casas, reported that "the conquistadors would test their swords and manly strength on captured Indians and place bets on the slicing off of heads or the cutting of bodies in half with one blow."

After initially welcoming the visitors, the Taíno tried bravely to defend themselves. There were many battles in which the Taíno routed the Spanish, but European cannons, steel swords, horses and dogs finally overwhelmed the Taíno resistance. Diseases like smallpox also killed many of the native people. Within 50 years of Columbus' arrival, the Taíno Arawak population of Hispaniola had been virtually destroyed.

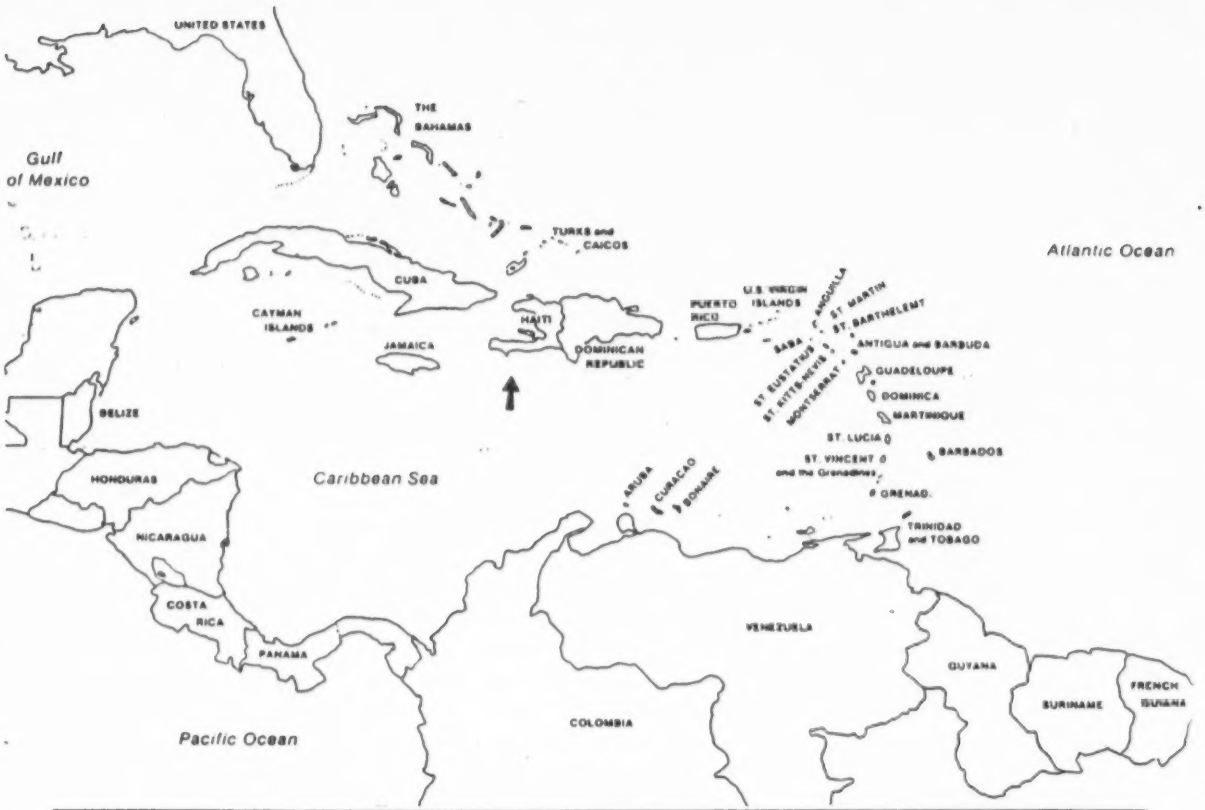


The Africans

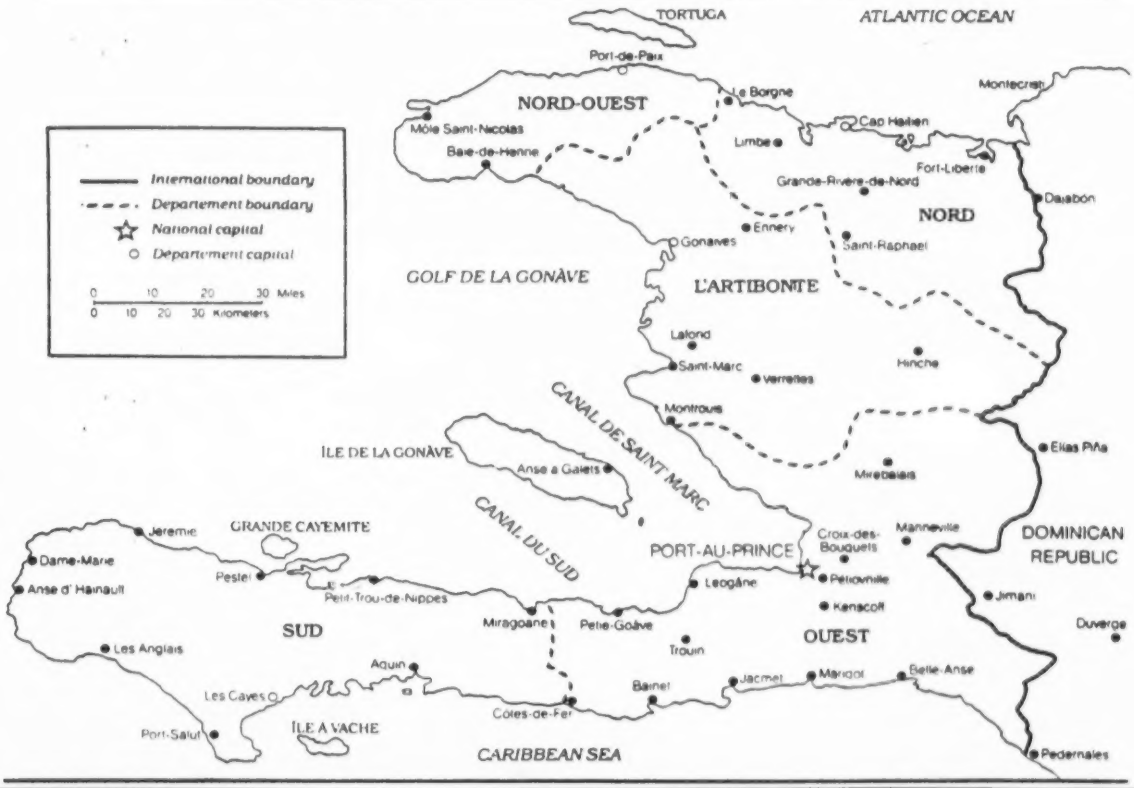
To replace the Taínos' labor, the Spanish began bringing in Africans to work as slaves. But Hispaniola, it turned out, had little gold, and

The Arawak carved figures in human and animal shapes from stone, shell, wood, gold and other materials. The figures, called cemís, *were used to drive away evil spirits and ensure a good harvest.*

Map of the Caribbean



Map of Haiti



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most of the Spanish eventually moved on to search for riches in Mexico and Peru.

Spanish neglect of Hispaniola opened the way for French and British pirates who used the western part of the island as a base. Eventually, permanent French settlements were established. Spain ceded the western third of Hispaniola to France in 1697. France called its new colony St. Domingue.

Seeking Salvation

"The slaves destroyed [the plantations] tirelessly. Like the peasants in the Jacquirie or the Ludite wreckers, they were seeking their salvation in the most obvious way, the destruction of what they knew was the cause of their suffering; and they had suffered much. They knew that as long as these plantations stood, their lot would be to labour on them until they dropped. From their masters they had known rape, torture, degradation, and, at the slightest provocation, death. They returned in kind... Now that they held power, they did as they had been taught.

And yet they were surprisingly moderate... They did not maintain this revengeful spirit for long. The cruelties of property and privilege are always more ferocious than the revenges of poverty and oppression. For the one aims at perpetuating resented injustice, the other is merely a momentary passion soon appeased... in all the records of that time there is no single instance of such fiendish torture as burying white men up to the neck and smearing the holes in their face to attract insects, or blowing them up with gun powder, or any of the thousand and one bestialities to which they had been subjected..."

• C.L.R. James, in the *The Black Jacobins*

The French imported at least half a million Africans to work on sugar, coffee, cotton and indigo plantations. Under French rule, St. Domingue became the most valuable colony in the Caribbean, producing more sugar than all the British Caribbean islands put together. This wealth was based on brutal slavery, administered by corrupt French military officials. Many Africans died after only a few years in St. Domingue; they were quickly replaced by new arrivals.

The Haitian Revolution

After nearly a century of suffering, in 1791, the slaves on St. Domingue rose up in rebellion. Unlike slave revolts elsewhere, the St. Domingue slaves successfully overthrew their masters and the entire slave system. They won the colony's independence from France and established the world's first independent Black republic, Haiti.

Did you know that about nine hundred Haitians fought for the independence of the United States in the Battle of Savannah in 1779?

Several factors contributed to the slaves' success. Most important were the unity and rebellious spirit of the St. Domingue slaves themselves. This was linked in part to Vodou, based on African religious beliefs, which

Drawing from *Goute Sel*, Literacy Manual. The sounding of the conch shell is a symbol of the call for liberation.

Toussaint Louverture, 1743-1803

bonded slaves of different ethnic backgrounds together (See *Vodou: A Haitian Way of Life*). Second, the French Revolution of 1789 upset the balance of power in France's colonies and triggered slave rebellions all over the Caribbean.

The leadership of Toussaint Louverture was a third critical factor. A former slave, Toussaint was a brilliant military and political strategist. Under his leadership, the slaves defeated Spanish and British invasions and forced France to abolish slavery.

Napoleon Bonaparte's French troops finally captured Toussaint and exiled him to France, where he died. But the army of former slaves, led by the Black general Jean-Jacques Dessalines, went on to defeat the French forces. On January 1, 1804, Dessalines declared independence. The new state was baptized Haiti, from the Arawak name for the island.

The Two Worlds of Haiti

The Western, slave-holding powers viewed the Haitian Revolution as a dangerous example of slave revolt. They isolated the new Black republic, cutting off trade and refusing diplomatic recognition. France recognized Haiti in 1838 in exchange for a large payment which placed Haiti heavily in debt. The United States did not recognize Haiti until 1862, after the slave-holding states seceded from the Union.

This isolation had some positive effects: it allowed a vibrant and original Haitian culture to develop and flourish. During this period, Haitian Creole (or *Kreyol*) emerged as a language in its own right, drawing elements from French and from African languages.

"The Haitian revolution was the beginning of the end for slavery in the western hemisphere. The Haitian revolution... proved that freedom could be won."
•Dr. Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Caribbean Connections*

On the other hand, Haiti's ten years of war, followed by its political isolation, concentrated power in the hands of the Haitian military. Many of the Haitian presidents who followed Dessalines were generals of the slave army. Their rule was dictatorial and often corrupt.

French colonial rule had divided the population by race, and these divisions persisted. Few whites were left in the country after the revolution. But rivalry continued between Black Haitians and those of mixed race, known as mulattoes. Many mulattoes had owned property before the revolution, and they remained a privileged class. But now, Black officers from Toussaint's army competed for power and wealth.

The most important division, however, was not between Blacks and mulattoes. It was between a tiny, privileged minority (which included Haitians of both races) and the majority of the population, the former slaves. The elite group lived in the towns, especially the capital, Port-au-Prince. It controlled the government, the military, and commerce. The majority of Haitians lived in the countryside, farming small plots of land. They grew coffee for export, and crops such as corn, beans and yams to eat. These farmers paid taxes which went into the pockets of government officials. But the government did almost nothing to help the rural areas, which lacked roads, schools, electricity or running water.

These two worlds of Haiti—the towns and the countryside—were culturally separate as well. Town-dwellers used the French language for the affairs of government and commerce. But most rural people spoke Haitian Creole. They were shut out of the political process, which was carried out in a language they did not speak.

Town people often tried to imitate a European lifestyle. In the countryside, by contrast, life was shaped by Vodou and other African-based tradi-

Papa and Baby Doc

tions. These included a rich folklore of stories, legends, proverbs and songs (see *Folktales*). Customs of sharing and self-help, such as the konbit, helped peasant communities survive in the face of government indifference (see *The Konbit*).

U.S. Occupation

In the late 1800s, U.S. business interests such as sugar and fruit growers were expanding south, into the Caribbean. U.S. trade with Haiti was growing, and U.S. officials and business leaders wanted to make sure that European commercial interests did not compete. They especially feared the extensive German commercial involvement in Haiti. Using Haitian political instability as a justification, U.S. Marines invaded Haiti in 1915. They stayed for 19 years.

The U.S. imposed martial law and took control of Haiti's finances. It rewrote the Haitian constitution to permit foreigners to own land. U.S. investment in Haiti tripled between 1915 and 1930. Under U.S. military rule, roads, telephones and electricity were extended to some parts of Haiti. But many of the roads actually were built by Haitians who were forced to work without pay. This forced labor, along with the racist attitudes of many U.S. soldiers and administrators, caused widespread resentment.

"You know, I had something to do with the running of a couple of little republics. The facts are that I wrote Haiti's Constitution myself, and if I do say it, I think it's a pretty good Constitution." • Franklin Delano Roosevelt

Uruguayan historian Eduardo Galeano writes in *Open Veins of Latin America*, "the U.S. occupied Haiti and, in that Black country that had been the scene of the first victorious slave revolt, introduced racial segregation and forced labor, killed fifteen hundred workers in one of its repressive operations (documented in a 1922 US Senate investigation), and when the local government refused to turn the Banco Nacional into a branch of New York's National City Bank, suspended the salaries of the president and his ministers so that they might think again."

A Haitian resistance leader, Charlemagne Péralte, led an army of peasant rebels who fought against the occupation. But the U.S. military put down the revolt, killing thousands of Haitians. Charlemagne Péralte was assassinated and his body put on gruesome display.

The United States finally pulled out of Haiti in 1934, leaving behind a legacy of anti-American feeling. It also left a U.S.-trained military force, the Haitian National Guard, which replaced the remnants of Toussaint's army. The Guard became the foundation of a new Haitian army, which involved itself in politics and held virtual veto power over election results. In 1957, François Duvalier, a doctor, was elected president with the support of the Haitian army and the U.S. government.

The Duvalier Regimes

Instead of keeping his promise to help the Black majority, "Papa Doc" Duvalier built a family dictatorship. He killed, imprisoned or exiled thousands of people who he thought might threaten his rule. To eliminate possible organized opposition, he destroyed or took over political parties, student organizations, trade unions, and the press.

Duvalier created an armed militia loyal to himself, the Tontons Macoutes. In 1964 he declared himself President-for-Life. Haiti would have no more elections.

Papa Doc died in 1971 after handing the presidency to his 19-year-old son Jean-Claude. The younger Duvalier, sometimes called "Baby Doc," executed fewer political opponents than his father.

But he continued to use arbitrary arrest, torture and imprisonment.

Haiti under the Duvaliers was marked by extremes of poverty and wealth, as it still is today. Per capita income was only $377 in 1985; most Haitians earned even less. The Duvalier family's fortune was estimated to be $500 million or more, most of it obtained through corruption. Government officials, army officers, coffee exporters and landowners lived in luxurious hillside villas with fountains and swimming pools. In the slums below, poor people crowded into wretched shacks criss-crossed by open sewers.

The unequal distribution of wealth in Haiti contributed to environmental destruction. Rich landowners, the state, and foreign companies controlled the best farm lands. As a result, poor farmers had to clear land on steep mountain slopes to plant their crops. As trees were uprooted, erosion stripped the soil away. Trees were also cut to make charcoal, the only fuel poor families could afford. The hills became barren and dusty.

Poverty forced hundreds of thousands of rural Haitians to migrate to Port-au-Prince in search of work. Others were recruited to cut sugar cane in the neighboring Dominican Republic, under conditions resembling slavery. Thousands more fled to foreign countries—the United States, Canada and France, among others. An estimated one million Haitians now live outside Haiti.

Aid from foreign governments and international lending agencies provided much of the revenue for Duvalier's government. Much of it disappeared into the pockets of corrupt officials. Foreign churches and charities provided most public services like clinics and schools.

The Haitian government's corruption prompted some donors to reduce their aid. But the United States continued its support. U.S. officials knew that Duvalier was brutal; but his anti-communism made him appear a useful ally. This policy protected the profits of U.S. businesses with investments in Haiti, but it did not benefit the majority of U.S. citizens. And by helping to keep a cruel dictator in power, Washington increased the suffering of the Haitian people.

Duvalier Overthrown

From the late 1970s onward, various factors weakened Jean-Claude Duvalier's hold on power. Foreign governments, including the U.S. under President Carter, urged Duvalier to ease repression. In response, Duvalier allowed some political parties, trade unions, human rights groups and independent journalists to function.

With the election of President Reagan in 1980, however, anti-communism became once again the focus of U.S. policy. Twenty-four days after Reagan's election, the Duvalier government arrested more than 200 human rights workers, lawyers, trade unionists and journalists. The crackdown temporarily smashed the democracy movement, but Haitians' hopes for freedom had been raised.

Economic conditions became steadily worse for most Haitians. In 1978 a disease called African swine fever killed some Haitian pigs. To stop the spread of the disease, U.S. agencies supervised the slaughter of the entire Haitian pig population, including healthy hogs. For many rural families, the pigs had represented their only cash savings. Their loss left rural Haitians worse off than ever before.

Some wealthy Haitians were also becoming dissatisfied with Baby Doc. Quarrels among the powerful weakened Jean-Claude Duvalier's control.

The opposition movement that finally toppled Duvalier was not an armed insurgency. Nor was it led by politicians. Rather, the driving energy came from young Haitians—students, young working adults, schoolchildren—angered by the suffering under Duvalier.

They were encouraged by new forces within the Catholic Church. The Catholic bishops had long supported the Duvalier government, but many priests, nuns and lay Catholics did not. They lived and worked with the poor, and saw Haiti's problems through their eyes. These religious workers helped to organize the *ti legliz*, or little church. In these base Christian communities, Haitians came together to pray and discuss the country's problems. Church workers who spoke out against the government were jailed and even tortured. As a result, members of the Catholic hierarchy gradually turned against the regime.

Anti-government protests swept through Haiti in 1985. Encouraged by the Church, tens of thousands of people marched in processions, singing

"We would rather die standing up than live on our knees!" During protests in the town of Gonaives, soldiers shot four schoolchildren dead. This was the turning point. Rebellion against the government spread throughout the country.

Faced with widespread revolt, U.S. officials decided that Duvalier had to go. Two months after the Gonaives shootings, the U.S. government finally cut off economic aid to the Haitian government. Without U.S. support Duvalier could not stay in power. On February 7, 1986, a U.S. Air Force jet flew Duvalier and his family to exile in France.

A victim of attack at a polling station. Photo: Mike Kamber.

Thousands of Haitians took to the streets in joyous celebrations. Afterwards, "Operation Uproot" sought to wipe out all traces of the Duvalierist past. Throughout Haiti, people organized to force Duvalier supporters from public office. Some Tontons Macoutes were lynched by angry mobs; most escaped into hiding.

Duvalierism Without Duvalier

For the first time in decades, people could discuss politics openly. They could form organizations not controlled by the government. Hundreds of groups sprang up, including farmers' associations, human rights groups, youth clubs and neighborhood committees. (See *Roots of Democracy*, p. 23)

Through these organizations, Haiti's poor sought major changes in their country. All Haitians, they argued, should have access to food, jobs, housing, land and education. The elected leaders should serve the people in a constitutional democracy.

These expectations were soon disappointed. After Duvalier left, U.S. officials helped organize a hasty transfer of power to a governing council composed of men who had been closely associated with Duvalier. The council did not enact any economic or land reform benefiting the poor. The minimum wage remained at $3.00 per day. When workers tried to form unions they were fired, just as in the old days under Duvalier. The council allowed notorious Duvalier officials to leave the country rather than face trials for killings and

Union Organizing After Duvalier

"I cannot find words to adequately explain to you the true conditions under which we are working. Let me just give you a few examples. Workers at Fabnac are in temperatures of 35-45° C [95-113° F]. We breathe plastic and chemical materials without any protection. The noise surpasses all normal decibels. We receive 15 gourdes [$3] for each day's work...

On March 11th, 1986, we wrote a letter which we sent to management, the Ministry of Social Affairs and all the press in the country. We told them that we workers at Fabnac had formed a union to ask for better working conditions and to claim our rights, as one is supposed to do in a democratic society...

...To our great astonishment, they fired all those who had joined the union. The management formed its own union with three members, all heads of departments in the factory... Under the pretext that those who had been fired the previous day would return to create trouble, three truckloads of Leopards and Cassemes Dessalines military arrived at Mews with automatic arms–machine guns, Uzis, M16s, and galliles.

We realize that we have not become free since the 7th of February..."

- a worker in Port-au-Prince at Fabnac, a company that made tennis shoes and Fab detergent. The worker would not reveal his name for fear of reprisal. March 23, 1986.

torture they had committed.

When people tried to protest peacefully, soldiers opened fire. Persons who spoke out against the governing council were arrested, or simply "disappeared."

The new leaders represented the same groups which had held power all along: wealthy civilians, high-ranking military men, Tontons Macoutes. They did not want to lose their privileges. Above all, they did not want any investigation into past human rights abuses. Haitians began speaking of the new government as "Duvalierism without Duvalier."

United States support helped keep the governing council in power. Soon after Duvalier's departure, the U.S. sent tear gas, truncheons and rubber bullets to help the Haitian army "keep order." The gear was used against unarmed civilians, and Haitians' anger at the United States grew.

U.S. officials argued that the governing council would hold elections soon. But as the election date neared, it became clear that powerful groups in Haiti did not want voting to take place. Death squads roamed the capital, dumping bodies in the street. Arsonists torched the headquarters of the electoral commission, the company that printed the ballots, and the homes and offices of presidential candidates.

On November 29, 1987—election day—truckloads of soldiers and Tontons Macoutes raced from one polling station to the next, strafing lines of voters with machine gun fire. By 9am, dozens of people lay dead. The election was canceled.

The next two years saw a succession of leaders installed by army-controlled "elections" and coups. The vibrant democratic movement of youth, peasant groups and human rights organizations was forced underground. Many of its members were jailed, or forced to leave the country.

Lavalas

One of the few who dared speak out publicly against the regime was Father Jean-Bertrand Aristide, parish priest of a small church in one of the capital's most desperate slums. Father Aristide worked with the poorest Haitians. He founded an orphanage called *Lafanmi Selavi* (The Family Is Life) where homeless boys could study, play and work in a community.

Father Aristide preached fiery sermons about Haiti's need for a *lavalas*—a cleansing flood to rid the country of corruption and make it new. He talked about the army's brutality, and about how the rich in Haiti took advantage of the poor. He spoke about how foreign interests had controlled Haiti throughout much of its history.

Aristide's message angered members of the powerful class. Numerous attempts were made on his life. One Sunday morning in 1988, Aristide's parishioners were in church singing "Let the Holy Spirit descend on us. We have a mission for Haiti." Suddenly armed men blasted the church with machine gun fire. At least 13 churchgoers lay dead and 80 were wounded. The church burned to the ground.

Aristide's message also alienated the top levels of the Catholic hierarchy. A month after the church was attacked, the Vatican ordered Aristide to leave Haiti. In response, Haitians took to the streets in huge demonstrations of support for Aristide. They blocked the road to the airport, and Aristide remained in Haiti.

When the military rulers announced that elections would be held in 1990, Aristide announced his candidacy, calling the campaign Operation Lavalas. He said, "Alone we are weak; together we are strong. All together we are a deluge." He promised a government based on participation,

Goute Sel, 1986

honesty, and justice.

On December 16, 1990, Haitians turned out by the thousands to vote for Lavalas. Aristide won with 67% of the votes—a landslide. A rival candidate backed and financed by the United States, Marc Bazin, received only 13% of the votes. International observer teams pronounced the election free and fair.

Haiti now had a democratically elected president for the first time in its history. He faced a daunting task. Expectations were high: Haitians hoped the new government would quickly dismantle the Duvalierist system, stimulate economic development, and provide everyone in Haiti with a decent quality of life.

Eleksyon 1990
Ayiti
An nou kole zepòl
pou yon Ayiti miyò.
Misyon obsèvatè Nasyonzini - Ayiti 1990
Mission d'observation des Nations Unies - Haiti 1990

Election 1990
Let's put our shoulders together for a better Haiti
United Nations' Mission of Observers Haiti 1990

In its seven months in office, Aristide's government made significant progress. It started the process of reforming the army and bringing it under civilian control. The notorious Tontons Macoutes and rural police were reined in. Human rights abuses and street crime dropped dramatically.

The administration attacked government corruption, bloated payrolls and drug running. The economy began to grow again. Aristide quickly gained the confidence of foreign governments, and 15 international donors pledged $500 million in grants and loans for Haiti's development. Most important of all, the mood in Haiti changed to one of hope. The flow of "boat people" leaving Haiti slowed to a trickle, as Haitians began to see a future in their own country.

The Coup: Starting Again

The 1990 election had installed a popular leader, but it had not changed the underlying structures of the society. Corrupt army officers and wealthy civilians still held the real power. President Aristide's vow to root out corruption and reform the military challenged the power and privileges of these groups. On Sept. 29, 1991, the army staged a bloody coup d'etat. Aristide was forced into exile.

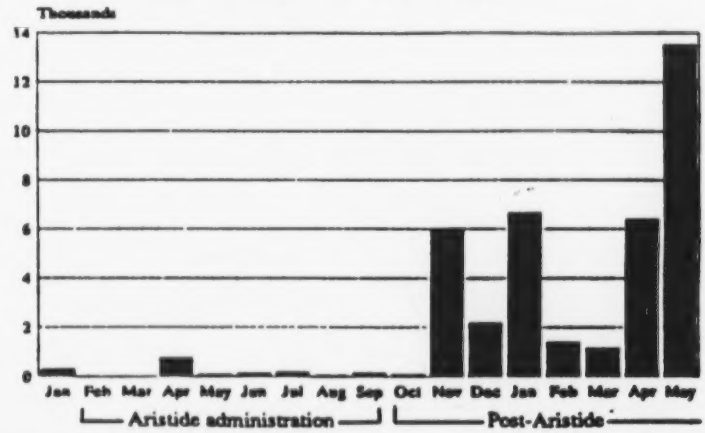
The military set up a series of puppet regimes to provide a facade of civilian rule. In 1992 Marc Bazin, the U.S. favorite, was installed as prime minister, but the armed forces remained in control.

The military unleashed a reign of terror aimed at silencing and destroying the democratic movement. An estimated 3,000 people were killed in the twelve months after the coup. Gunmen rode through poor communities which were known to support Aristide, firing randomly. The rural police chiefs were installed once again to terrorize the countryside.

Many, fearing for their lives, went into hiding. Resistance to the military regime continues, but largely underground. Public meetings were forbidden and military spies were everywhere, even inside the schools. The dominant mood in Haiti was anger and despair. "With Aristide, we never felt hungry even when we were starving," explained a Port-au-Prince shantytown resident. "Now we feel hungry after we've eaten, because we have lost him."

Within a month of the coup, refugees began pouring out of Haiti. During the seven months of Aristide's administration only 1,275 Haitian boat people had been picked up by the U.S. Coast Guard. That number exploded to almost 40,000 in the first 15 months of the military regime. After initially holding the refugees in a makeshift camp, the Bush Administration finally ordered that all Haitians picked up at sea be returned to Haiti. Even

Coast Guard Interdictions of Haitian Refugees
Monthly Totals for 1991 through May 31, 1992



those who feared for their lives in Haiti would be given no chance to state their case for asylum in the United States.

Bush Administration officials wanted the flow of refugees to stop, but they were unwilling to address the cause of the problem—the illegal military regime and human rights abuses in Haiti. The United States joined Latin American countries in imposing a trade embargo on Haiti, but the embargo was weakly enforced, and it failed to persuade the military to give up power. U.S. media have been subject to the influence of public relations firms hired by the *de facto* government to downplay human rights abuses and discredit President Aristide.

The arrival of the Clinton Administration in January 1993 brought hope to the Haitian people and raised expectations for a quick resolution to the crisis. However, President Clinton broke his campaign promises on Haiti when he adopted the Bush Administration policy of forcibly repatriating Haitian refugees. The administration instituted a naval blockade to intercept and repatriate all Haitians fleeing repression. Furthermore, they joined the international community in pressuring President Aristide to make unilateral concessions to the Haitian military.

On July 3rd, 1993 President Aristide and the military leader, Raoul Cédras signed an accord at Governors Island, New York. The agreement called for Aristide to return to Haiti as President on October 30, 1993. But the agreement was fraught with loopholes and shortcomings. The accord allowed the military to remain in power until October 15 to preside over the transition process. It called for President Aristide to declare an amnesty for the coup leaders; and it called for economic measures that would further impoverish the vast majority of Haitians. Aristide signed this accord under immense international pressure.

Working within the context of the accord, President Aristide named a new Prime Minister and a new government was formed. But the new Prime Minister, Robert Malval, and his new government were unable to govern due to the wave of terror unleashed by the military and its paramilitary forces, known as attachés. Scores of people were killed, including Antoine Izmery, a key Aristide supporter from the business community and Minister of Justice Guy Malary.

The military leaders did not resign on October 15 as they had promised in the Governors Island accord. President Aristide had to remain in exile and Prime Minister Malval resigned in December.

Haitian Military Leaders Trained in the United States

The U.S. Army School of the Americas (S.O.A.) in Fort Benning, Georgia, has been the training ground for some of Haiti's military. One student of the S.O.A. was Haiti's police chief, Major Joseph-Michel Francois. Francois played a key role in the coup that ousted President Aristide.

For more information regarding the U.S. Army School of the Americas, its history, and its role in U.S. foreign policy, contact: S.O.A. Watch, P.O. Box 3330, Columbus, GA 31903, 706-682-5369. They can also provide information about efforts by some members of Congress to cut funds to the S.O.A. because it trains the "worst human rights abusers in the Western Hemisphere." (Edwards, D-CA.)

Photo: © 1993, Charles Kernaghan

President Aristide convened a conference in January of 1994 to address the refugee crisis. The Clinton administration pressed Aristide to change the agenda to focus on power-sharing with pro-military and opposition forces. Military representatives were invited, but none attended.

On February 14, the Clinton administration announced a compromise plan calling for Aristide to once again appoint a new prime minister and name an interim government. Aristide rejected the proposal as pointless, noting that given the high level of repression the appointed government would be in too much danger to function. The Clinton administration blamed the lack of a solution to Haiti's crisis on Aristide's intransigence.

Meanwhile, the 40-member Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) criticized the administration for trying to "strong-arm Aristide into accepting a truly unacceptable agreement." They stated that if the United States really wanted to support democracy in Haiti, the government could vigorously support a more comprehensive trade embargo.

Military repressions continued, including the murder of Jean-Marie Vincent, a priest highly respected for his work with grassroots organizations. As the flow of refugees increased and many deaths were reported at sea, Guantanamo, Cuba was once again turned into a tent city.

On July 31, the UN Security Council authorized the use of force by the U.S. to remove the military government.

Threats to carry out this invasion yielded no response. At the eleventh hour, an agreement was negotiated with General Cedras, which called for a U.S. military intervention and the scheduled return of President Aristide on October 15, 1994.

The vast majority of Haitians see the restoration of the democratically elected Aristide government as crucial. They believe that other changes must also take place in Haiti. High-ranking officers who were linked to Duvalier, who committed human rights abuses, or who were involved in coup d'etats must be replaced. The military must be brought under civilian control. A new national police force, not connected to the army, will have to be formed. Major changes are needed in the judiciary system to sever it from its Duvalierist past. Most important, the economic and political system will need to change so that it addresses the needs of the majority.

Most Haitians, meanwhile, are struggling just to survive in a country where this requires tremendous courage and ingenuity (see *Haitian Voices*). Hopes for rapid change have died. But Haitians still have a vision of change, of a democratic society that permits a decent life for all its people. Haiti will not know peace until the patterns of the past are broken and this vision becomes a reality.

Key Dates In Haitian History

pre-1492 Fertile homeland of about one-million Taíno Arawak people. The socio-economic system provides food for all.

1492 Christopher Columbus lands and claims the island for Spain. Spanish build settlement of La Navidad.

1492-1550 Arawaks enslaved by Spaniards; forced labor and disease destroy Arawak population.

1520s Spanish first import Africans in slavery.

1629 French buccaneers establish base, leading to French settlement of western Hispaniola.

1697 Treaty of Ryswick divides Hispaniola into St. Domingue (French) and Santo Domingo (Spanish).

1750-90 St. Domingue produces more sugar than any other Caribbean colony, with labor of at least half a million enslaved Africans.

1791 Slave uprising led by Boukman.

1793 Slavery abolished in St. Domingue.

1798 Slave army led by Toussaint Louverture defeats British invasion force.

1802 Napoleon Bonaparte sends French troops to St. Domingue to restore slavery. Toussaint is captured.

1803 Army of former slaves, led by Dessalines, defeats French forces.

1804 Dessalines proclaims Haiti's independence.

1806 Dessalines assassinated.

1807-20 Haiti divided into northern kingdom ruled by Henri Christophe and southern republic governed by Alexandre Petion.

1820 Reunification under Jean-Pierre Boyer.

1838 France recognizes Haitian independence in exchange for large financial indemnity.

1822-44 Haiti occupies Spanish Santo Domingo.

1862 United States recognizes Haiti.

1915 United States occupies Haiti.

1915-19 Charlemagne Peralte leads peasant resistance to occupation; captured and assassinated in 1919.

1934 U.S. occupation withdrawn.

1957 François Duvalier elected president.

1964 Duvalier proclaims himself President-for-Life.

1970-80s Shift from agriculture to assembly industry such as tennis shoes and baseballs. 85% of profit from industry goes to the United States. Efforts to protest low pay and dangerous working conditions are severely repressed.

1971 François Duvalier dies after naming his son Jean-Claude as President-for-Life.

1972 First Haitian refugee "boat people" arrive in Florida.

1980 Crackdown on opposition groups; 200 journalists, lawyers and human rights workers arrested.

1981 U.S. and international agencies slaughter pigs in Haiti following outbreak of African swine fever.

1984 Anti-government riots in major Haitian towns.

1985 Soldiers shoot four schoolchildren during protests.

1986 Duvalier leaves with family for exile in France. National Governing Council formed, headed by Lieutenant General Henri Namphy.

1987 National election. Soldiers and *Tontons Macoutes* massacre voters; election cancelled.

1988 Army holds fraudulent election; Leslie Manigat becomes figurehead president. Coup d'etats put Gen. Namphy in power, followed by Lt. General Avril.

1990 Haiti successfully holds first democratic elections. Aristide wins with 67% of the popular vote against a well-financed, U.S. backed candidate, Marc Bazin.

1991 February: Aristide is inaugurated. The economy, education and human rights improve. Flow of refugees slows to a trickle.

September: Army seizes power in coup d'etat; Aristide goes into exile. Severe repression is unleashed against democratic and grass-roots groups. Thousands of refugees begin fleeing Haiti in boats.

October: Organization of American States condemns the coup and calls for a trade embargo.

1992 May: President Bush orders U.S. Coast Guard to intercept all Haitians leaving the island in boats and return them to Haiti.

July: Marc Bazin, who won only 13% of the vote in 1991, is sworn in as prime minister.

September: 50,000 people march in New York to show support for Aristide's return to Haiti.

1993 January: Naval blockade imposed to prevent Haitian refugees from fleeing to the U.S.

July: Governors Island Accord signed between President Aristide and military leader Raoul Cedrás setting Oct 30 as Aristide's return date.

October 15: General Raoul Cedrás refuses to step down as called for by the Governors Island Accord, delaying restoration of democracy.

1993-94 Many key leaders of the democratic movement are killed, such as Priest Jean-Marie Vincent.

1994 February: US encourages Aristide to agree to a coalition government

July: United Nations Security Council Resolution 940 authorizes the use of "any means necessary to facilitate the departure of the military leadership."

September 18: The U.S. military intervenes in Haiti.

Studying the Media

Newspapers suffer from the same biases that we have seen in our textbooks for years. Among the features of recent stories on Haiti include little or no use of Haitian sources; coverage of events that confirm a pre-existing bias or political sympathy while ignoring events that contradict biases or politics; and failure to present historical background, or presenting it in distorted ways. For students to form opinions and participate in public policy debate on Haiti, it is essential that they learn to be critical readers of the press.

A report by the Boston Media Action (BMA) demonstrates trends in the coverage that is still evident today. It also provides a model for students for evaluating contemporary reporting (for example, recording the frequency of various sources, checking for accuracy, who benefits from what images, and/or examining what percentage of articles provide the reader any historical context.)

Boston Media Action (BMA) analyzed 415 articles on Haiti from 4 mainstream papers (*New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Boston Globe*, and *Miami Herald*) for their coverage of the coup. They found that the print coverage of Haiti systematically distorted the human rights record of President Aristide while underplaying the terror practiced by the coup government.

The Aristide government did have documented human rights abuses during its seven months in office—26, according to Amnesty International, of which around two-thirds were attributed to the army, an army that bitterly opposed Aristide (Fig. 1). In contrast, the coup government in roughly the same period of time had 1,867 executions, 5,096 illegal and arbitrary arrests and 2,171 cases of beatings and shootings as documented by the Haiti Platform for Human Rights. These are conservative estimates that do not take into account the suppression of freedoms of press, assembly and so on.

In the first two weeks of the coup, however, print media devoted 60% of all paragraphs on attributable human rights abuses to Aristide, and 40% to the coup government. The media may consider this "balanced" coverage, but it was in fact fraudulent, given the true ratio (Fig. 2). It fostered the myth that the illegal coup government of Haiti was not worse than the Aristide government.

As weeks went on, the accusations against Aristide lessened. But by this time news about Haiti was no longer on the front page and public opinion had already been influenced. No attempt to critically reexamine earlier coverage appeared. An exception to this is the

Human Rights Abuses in Haiti

As documented by Amnesty International

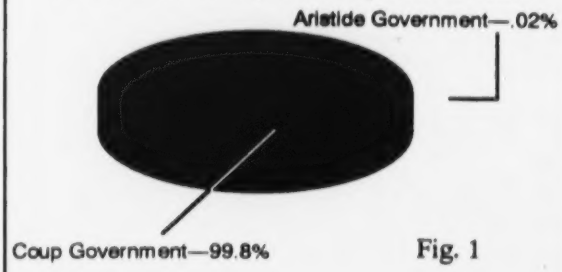


Fig. 1

As reported in U.S. newspapers

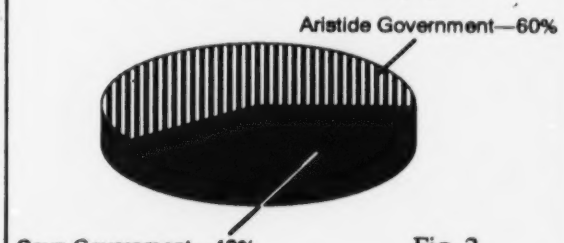


Fig. 2

widely read *New York Times* which continued to devote more space to purported abuses by the Aristide government than to the blood-soaked coup, by a ratio of 46:54 coup:Aristide. The figures are astonishing when one notes that for the entire nine-month period of the study, Aristide was out of the country, his government driven underground by a well-documented army rampage.

The Memory Hole

The absence of reporting on any historical background prior to the coup was systematic. Fully two-thirds of all stories contained no mention whatsoever of anything which had occurred prior to the coup. This cannot be explained away by the at-the-moment quality of standard news stories. BMA found that absolutely no historical perspective appeared in over half of the supposedly in-depth articles marked as "news analysis."

Mention of the pivotal role of the United States in Haitian history—for example, that the United States wrote Haiti's Constitution, founded its army, and has given support to every dictator of this century—is absent. On the rare occasion when journalists did mention the historical role of the United States, it evoked nostalgia. Howard French, for example, remarked in the *New York*

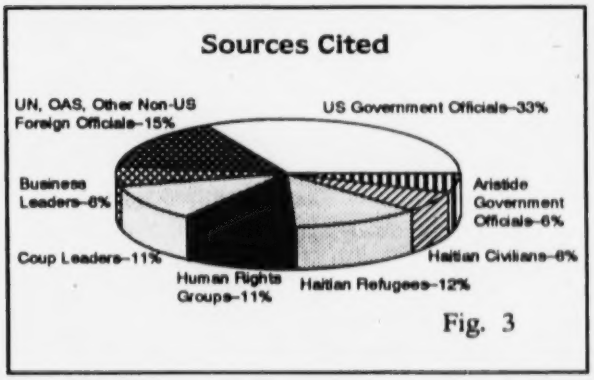


Fig. 3

Times that "[t]he United States occupied the country from 1915 to 1934, skeptical diplomats and Haitians often point out, and that achieved little more than a pause in the country's cycle of tyranny and instability" (January 28, 1992). Similarly, *Boston Globe* foreign policy critic David Nylan commented that "Haiti has always been a spooky backwater, an exotic and dangerous place. Previous U.S. interventions never wrought the result desired" (April 28, 1992). Of the 415 documents from the press examined, a critique of U.S. policy could only be found in a handful of letters to the editor.

The coverage allows a perpetuation of the myth that violence is endemic to Haiti and as such the U.S. government can do little, try as it might.

Haitians. What Haitians?

All four cities—New York, Washington, Boston, and Miami—have active Haitian communities, with recently-exiled democratic leaders. These leaders have not been interviewed by the press. It is not that this popular and realistic Haitian perspective is rebutted or even disparaged by the press; it is for all intents and purposes nonexistent. Figure 3 provides an example of the limited consulting of Haitian sources in its documentation of stories reporting on the debate as to whether Haitians are political or economic refugees.

Excerpts from a report prepared by Boston Media Action. For a complete copy, write to the Haiti Communications Project, 25 West St., 2nd Floor, Boston, MA 02111.

Teachers: See suggestions for classroom activities related to this article in *Teaching/Action Ideas.*

Reading Between The Lines

(1) Reading the articles on the front page about Haiti, what impression do you get of the Haitian people? Who is quoted? Whose voices don't make page one? If you were a reporter in Haiti, how would you try to cover events more fully?

(2) Whose opinions are quoted most frequently in the articles? Tally the comments. How many are from the State Department? How often are people from progressive organizations in Haiti quoted? (Remember, individuals may be interviewed, but that still masks any evidence of organized opposition in Haiti.)

(3) Aristide is the democratically elected President of Haiti. Is he ever quoted for a statement he has made directly to the press, or are his comments in response to a quote from the State Department?

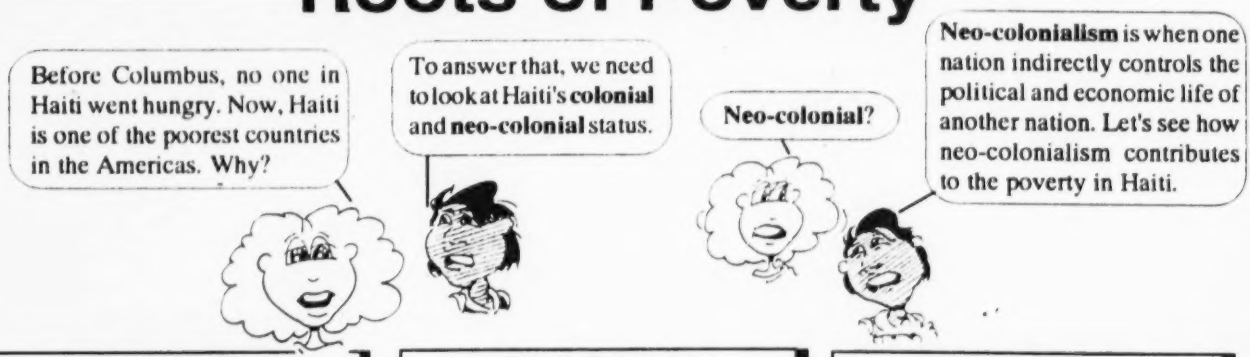
(4) Does the media provide any background information? For example, when discussing the return to Haiti of Aristide, do they describe the social policies he was in the process of implementing before the coup?

(5) What adjectives are used to describe the Haitian military? Can you find any clippings which describe them as the "U.S. trained military"?

(6) Cut out all the photos from the articles about Haiti. Separate the images of North Americans from the images of Haitians. Post them on the wall for the whole class to see. What adjectives would you use to describe the North Americans? What adjectives would you use to describe the Haitians? (From a lesson by Martha Matlaw and Rachelle Resnick).

(7) What are the implications of the coverage? What impact does the media have on opinions in the United States about Haiti and U.S. policy towards the region?

Roots of Poverty


Before Columbus, no one in Haiti went hungry. Now, Haiti is one of the poorest countries in the Americas. Why?
To answer that, we need to look at Haiti's **colonial** and **neo-colonial** status.
Neo-colonial?
Neo-colonialism is when one nation indirectly controls the political and economic life of another nation. Let's see how neo-colonialism contributes to the poverty in Haiti.

Assembly Plants

Haitian women make many of the baseballs used in the United States. Earning less than $3/day, they have no health benefits and work in hazardous conditions. When the women call for higher wages, the companies threaten to move and the outspoken workers are repressed.

Do the factories at least help the Haitian economy?

No, they mostly help the U.S. business owners. Of every $1 profit from assembly, 85 cents is returned to the U.S. companies.

Pyramid of Exploitation

A small elite robs the poor of the fruits of their labor and the resources of the land. The government makes most of its revenue by taxing peasants, yet these same peasants receive almost no services (education, sanitation, irrigation, protection, etc.) from the government.

In rural areas, the government maintains control through a network of 300 local military commanders (*chef seksyon*), established during the U.S. occupation (1915-34). The *chef seksyon* function as judge, jury and often executioner. Barely paid themselves, they often collect official and arbitrary taxes. A share is passed on to their superiors.

Agro-Exports and the Environment

A few wealthy landowners use the most fertile lands to grow coffee and cacao for export. Profits from these sales go to Haitian and foreign businesses. The peasants are left with little income and no fertile land on which to plant corn, rice, beans and cassava to feed their families.

"My children are dying from hunger, yet I have no land to grow food. Big companies own the land and grow coffee for export."

"I can only plant on poor land in the hills because rich landowners own all the best land. I know it causes erosion, but what can I do? My children must eat!"

According to a recent study, Haitian farmers could grow enough food to feed the population, but first the economic and political priorities would need to change.

Think About It

- ❑ The *lavalas* movement aims to uproot this unjust political and economic system. Who would benefit from this change? Who would lose?
- ❑ Some believe that if the *lavalas* movement succeeds, the "flood" of change could spread to other countries. Who would be worried about this flood of change?

Repression of Grassroots Development

"Why don't the Haitian people farm together so that they can grow more efficiently?"

"We try to. For instance, the Papaye Peasant Movement with assistance from Oxfam established a credit union, tree nursery, pig farm, print shop and tool making workshops. The day of the coup against Aristide, the military destroyed our office. They arrested one of the coordinators and beat him until he couldn't stand up. They stole the organization's records and peasants' savings. This happens all the time."

AID/IMF*/World Bank

"What about all the foreign aid? Does that solve the problem?"

No. In fact, in the 1980s, the Agency for International Development (AID) used food aid to "encourage" peasants to shift 30% of tilled land from domestic food to export crops. AID flooded Haiti with millions of dollars worth of food aid at harvest time. Local prices dropped so low that farmers had to shift from corn and rice to export crops such as coffee. The farmers earned less because international market prices go up and down and the farmers had to pay export taxes. Although poor before, at least they had corn and rice to feed their children. Now they have only coffee.

Foreign aid is also used literally to "pave the way" for the assembly industry through road construction, lighting, port containerization, and new phone systems.

* International Monetary Fund (IMF)

For further information, see DeWind, J. & Kinley, D. (1986.) *Aiding Migration: The Impact of Development Assistance on Haiti.* Center for the Social Sciences: Immigration Research Program.

Assistance with this page provided by Kathy McAfee and Bill Bigelow.

A.I.D.: Who Is It Helping?

Photo: © 1993, Charles Kernaghan

Women's clothing is produced here for WalMart, Sears and J.C. Penney Port-au-Prince

Who benefits from U.S. State Department Agency for International Development (AID) aid to Haiti? This is the question asked by a delegation of prominent U.S.labor leaders. They were distressed to find that U.S. AID has supported the business elite. The results of their investigation are published in *Haiti After the Coup: Sweatshop or Real Development?* (April, 1993).

According to U.S. AID's own accounts, the agency was aware of the Haitian elite's corruption, the extreme poverty of the average Haitian, and the lack of worker rights in Haiti's export industries. Yet AID continued to spend U.S. taxpayers money on the development of Haiti's low wage assembly sector throughout the 1980s. In fact, U.S. AID appeared to be very comfortable with the "political stability" of the Duvalier dictatorship, which inspired international investor confidence. Following are some highlights from the committee's report:

◆ U.S. AID actively opposed a minimum wage increase from $.33 to $.50. It argued that the increase would price Haiti out of the low-wage assembly market, an argument known to be untrue.

◆ Between 1983 and 1989, as apparel exports from Haiti to the US doubled, real wages in Haiti were slashed 56%. While U.S. AID spent millions to promote investment in the assembly sector, the violation of internationally recognized worker rights continued unchecked.

◆ In February 1992, the Bush Administration exempted U.S. manufacturers from the embargo. Products (such as clothing and baseballs) valuing more than $67 million were imported to the United States from Haiti during the embargo.

◆ Unions and peasant organizations continue to be the target of fierce military repression. At the time of the coup, the Aristide government was moving to reform the labor courts, increase minimum wage, restart the workers' national health and benefits program, bar the military from intervening in workplace disputes and guarantee the right to organize. All of this work was destroyed by the coup.

The National Labor Committee's report concludes that the new focus of U.S. international economic development policies must be real development led by new investments in Haiti—rather than investment diversion from the US— and workers' rights guarantees that truly have teeth.

Excerpted with permission from *Connection to the Americas*, Resource Center on the Americas (RCTA), MN.

Kellwood Today:
Low Cost Manufacturing

Kellwood Company

Comparative Average Hourly Wage Rates

United States	$8.45
Saipan	$2.79
Hong Kong	$2.50
Taiwan	$2.50
Costa Rica	$1.09
Mexico	$0.88
Dominican Republic	$0.75
Honduras	$0.61
Haiti	$0.58
Sri Lanka	$0.26
China	$0.25

Chart presented to Merrill Lynch, April 7, 1992, as one of the reasons why investors should buy Kellwood stock.

For copies of *Haiti After the Coup* (w/useful charts and graphs) send $5 to the **National Labor Committee Education Fund in Support of Worker and Human Rights in Central America**, 15 Union Square West, NY, NY 10003-3377 (212) 242-0700.

Aristide: In the Parish of the Poor

Father Jean-Bertrand Aristide is president of Haiti, currently in exile. A leading member of the Ti Legliz *(Little Church) movement, he has spent his life ministering to Haiti's poorest communities. Fr. Aristide gained the respect and love of many Haitians by speaking out fearlessly about the injustice in Haitian society. But his message angered those who profit from the system, and there have been several attempts to assassinate him. Here Father Aristide explains why the church should help organize for change.*

In Haiti, it is not enough to heal wounds, for every day another wound opens up. It is not enough to give the poor food one day, to buy them antibiotics one day, to teach them to read a few sentences or to write a few words. Hypocrisy. The next day they will be starving again, feverish again, and they will never be able to buy the books that hold the words that might deliver them. Beans and rice are hypocrisy when the pastor gives them only to a chosen few among his own flock, and thousands and thousands of others starve.

What good does it do the peasant when the pastor feeds his children? For a moment, the peasant's anguish is allayed. For one night, he can sleep easier, like the pastor himself. For one night, he is grateful to the pastor, because that night he does not have to hear the whimpers of his children, starving. But the same free foreign rice the pastor feeds to the peasant's children is being sold on the market for less than the farmer's own produce. The very food that the pastor feeds the peasant's children is keeping the peasant in poverty, unable himself to feed his children. And among those who sell the foreign rice are the big landholders who pay the peasant fifty cents a day to work on their fields; among those who profit from the food the pastor gives the children are the same men who are keeping the peasant in utter poverty, poverty without hope.

Would it not be better—and I ask the question in all humility, in its fullest simplicity—for the peasant to organize with others in his situation and force the large landholders to increase the peasants' pay? Would it not be wiser—more Christian—for the pastor, while he feeds those children, to help the peasant learn to organize? Isn't this a better way to stop the children's cries of hunger forever? As long as the pastor keeps feeding the peasant's children without helping deliver the peasant from poverty, the peasant will never escape the humiliating fate to which he has been assigned by the corrupt system. When the pastor only feeds the children, he is participating in that corrupt system, allowing it to endure. When the pastor feeds the children *and* helps organize the

peasants, he is refusing the corrupt system, bringing about its end. Which behavior is more Christian, more evangelical?

I chose the second course, along with many of my colleagues... I chose to help organize youth, I chose to preach deliverance from poverty, I chose to encourage my congregation to hope and believe in their own powers. For me it is quite simple: I chose life over death. I preached life to my congregation, not life as we live it in Haiti, a life of mud, dank cardboard walls, garbage, darkness, hunger, disease, unemployment, and oppression. But life as a decent poor man should live it, in a dry house with a floor and a real roof, at a table with food, free from curable illness, working a meaningful job or tilling the fields to his or her profit, proud.

The only way to preach a decent poor man's life in Haiti is to preach self-defense, defense from the system of violence and corruption that ruins our own and our children's lives. I hope and trust that I have preached self-defense to my people. I would feel myself a hypocrite otherwise. And I would rather die than be a hypocrite, rather die than betray my people, rather die than leave them behind in the parish of the poor.

❖❖❖❖❖

Open your eyes with me, sisters and brothers. It is morning. The night has been a long one, very long. Now, the dawn seems to be climbing up slowly from beneath the horizon. Wisps of smoke are rising up from the little houses of the village, and you can smell good cornmeal cereal cooking. The sky grows pink. An hour later, the children in their tidy, well-fitting uniforms run off to school, clutching new books in their arms. Women wearing shoes head off to market, some on horseback and donkey, others on motorcycle and bicycle. They all take the new paved road, down which buses take other women and men to market for the day. If you listen closely, you can hear the sound of running water, of faucets being turned on in houses. Then the men emerge, carrying shiny new tools, laughing together, their bodies strong and well fed. They head off for the fields. A new irrigation project has been installed and the crops are growing where before there was almost a desert. Throughout the village, you can hear laughter and the sound of jokes being told and listened to.

This is the village I call Esperancia. The day is coming when this village will exist, though now it is called Despair and its residents wear rags and never laugh. Yet when we look around this village I call Esperancia, we can see that not very much has changed since it was called Despair. This is what has changed: Everyone now eats a decent poor man's breakfast. There is a new road. The children now have books. The women have shoes. There is water, and running water. There is an irrigation project.

This is not very much to change. Yet just those few changes can turn Despair into Hope, and all it takes to change them is organization. In a year, the village of Esperancia could exist in any of our lands. Esperancia, El Salvador; Esperancia, Honduras; Esperancia, Guatemala. It is an honorable address in the parishes of the poor.

Let us leave our old homes of cardboard and mud floors. Let us make a plan to douse them with gasoline, and burn them to the ground. Let us turn our backs on that great fire and on that way of life, and hand in hand, calmly, intelligently, walk forward into the darkness toward the sunrise of Hope. Let us trust one another, keep faith with one another, and never falter.

Take my hand. If you see me stumble, hold me up. If I feel you weaken, I will support you. You, brother, hold up the lamp of solidarity before us. Sister, you carry the supplies. Yes, the road is long. I fear there are criminals on either side of us, waiting to attack. Do you hear them in the bushes, brothers and sisters? Hush! Yes, I can hear them loading their guns. Let us ignore their threats. Let us be fearless.

Let them come. They do not know it, but though they kill us, though they shoot and cut down every last one of us, there is another battalion about a mile back, coming and coming down this long path toward sunrise. And behind that battalion, another and another and another, God is for the big battalions, and the big battalions are the people. Let us keep the lamp of solidarity lit, and move forward.

Amen.

Excerpt from: Aristide, J-B. (1990). *In the Parish of the Poor: Writings from Haiti*. New York: Orbis Books. Photo: © 1992, Mev Puleo/Impact Visuals.

The Roots of Democracy: Haiti's Popular Movement

International media about prospects for democracy in Haiti focuses the spotlight on generals, politicians and individual citizens. Meanwhile the country's most significant actors—peasant groups, unions, student associations, religious and community organizations—are often ignored. However these organizations have been the prime movers in Haiti's movement for democracy. Over the past decade their strength has led to the:

- Overthrow of Jean-Claude Duvalier in 1986.
- Election of Jean-Bertrand Aristide
- Inability of the generals to "normalize" the coup

Civil society began its rapid growth with the fall of the Duvalier dictatorship in 1986 and reached its zenith under the Aristide government. Jean-Claude Duvalier's flight to France, just a step ahead of countrywide popular protests, created a profound opening for independent associations which Haitians vigorously seized.

Known broadly as "popular organizations," the members of these groups came mostly from the country's vast poor majority. They formed farming cooperatives, Creole literacy programs, and rural development projects, often with the support from abroad. Churches — Catholic and Protestant — nurtured this movement, and lay participation in church activities exploded. Some associations took political actions to address issues of land distribution, corruption and human rights abuse. The strength of Haitian civil society lay in its breath and diversity outside the narrow realm of electoral politics.

In urban areas as well, the realms of organized activity broadened rapidly. Politically active trade unions, professional, student and women's organizations, and thousands of neighborhood associations and community groups were born. A vibrant press emerged, primarily in the form of the much-listened-to radio, providing information about other organizational activities and a forum to denounce periodic attacks on this independent movement.

The diversity and depth of civil society, as opposed to any particular political party, led to Jean-Bertrand Aristide's overwhelming victory in Haiti's first free elections in 1990. Most independent organizations flourished in the relatively free environment of Aristide's seven-month presidency. Many added members and redoubled their efforts.

Haitians abroad also play a role in the movement for a democratic, civil society in Haiti. They pressure for international attention on Haiti and provide financial support to their families at home. And they consistently mobilize around issues pertaining to the fair treatment of Haitians.

This surge of organized popular activity came to a halt with the September 1991 military coup. Far from a peripheral casualty, these organizations were as much the target of the army's repression as was the elected Aristide government. Violence was directed against the independent media, the Catholic and Protestant churches, particularly the *Ti Legliz* or popular church, pro-Aristide elected officials, rural development and peasant organizations, neighborhood and community associations, trade unions, and literacy, pro-democracy, student's and women's groups. Soldiers and section chiefs have arrested, beaten and killed group leaders and members.

A key issue to watch will be the relationship of foreign aid organizations with these indigenous groups. The organizations listed in the *Resource Guide* can provide current information and analysis.

Haitian Popular Organizations

- **Mouvman Peyizan Nasyonal Kongre Papay**
  National Peasant Movement of the Papay Congress
- **Federation Nationale des Etudiants Haitiens**
  National Federation of Haitian Students
- **Solidarite Fanm Ayisyen**
  Solidarity Among Haitian Women
- **Komite Kontak Nasyonal TKL**
  National Committee for Ecclesiastical Communities
- **and many more**

Write to NECA for a longer list and descriptions.

Excerpts from the Haiti Public Information Campaign press packet (for complete packet write to the Quixote Center) and the report: Americas Watch. (1993). *Silencing a People: The Destruction of Civil Society in Haiti.* New York: Americas Watch.

Haitian Voices

The majority of Haitians today have a vision of a democratic society that Haiti's military backed government does not share. This vision, and Haitians' determination to make it a reality, is Haiti's hope for the future.

In this section you will find excerpts from interviews with six teenagers and adults who live in Haiti and two Haitians in the United States. In most cases we have not used their last names for their protection.

The Haitian people's strength and courage has enabled them to keep on under adverse conditions. Strategies for economic survival vary. The vast majority of Haitians, like Anit (p. 28), live by farming the land. Although Anit's plot of land is small, and her living conditions barely minimal, land ownership is her security for the future.

Others are not so lucky. Many peasants who have lost their land, or who cannot live on what they are paid for their crops, have had to move to the towns to seek work. Fifi (p. 29) earns $15 a month as a domestic servant in Port-au-Prince, cleaning the houses of well-off families. Her own family of seven lives in a one-room house without running water. Yet for many families in the city slums, conditions are much worse.

Beatrice (p. 25) has never known poverty, although her family is not rich. She has the opportunity most Haitians lack, to study and go to college. But her awareness of how those around her are suffering has led Beatrice to ask questions, and finally to commit herself to the struggle for change in Haiti.

The following section includes Anit's, Fifi's and Beatrice's stories, as well as the personal testimonies of street children, a political organizer, a community organizer in Boston and a Haitian-American first grade teacher.

Below is some current data on Haiti. Numbers and statistics can't give us a complete picture of Haitian daily life. However, when used in conjunction with real life stories, these figures give us a background for understanding the conditions within which the majority of Haitians live and work.

Teachers: See suggestions for classroom activities related to this article in *Teaching/Action Ideas.*

Conditions of Life

Population

total	(1992)	6.8 million
under 18	(1990)	3.0 million
under 5	(1990)	1.0 million
in Rural Areas	(1992)	70%

Living Conditions (1992)

With sanitation services	25%
With safe drinking water	41%

Poverty Level (1980-90)

Population below absolute poverty level
Urban: 65% Rural: 80%

Life Expectancy (1992) 56 years

Infant Mortality Rate (1992)

87/1000 live births (under one year)
(U.S. infant average mortality rate: 9.8/1000 in 1989, District of Columbia 22.9/1000)

Child Deaths (1992)

before age 5	133/1000

Malnourishment (1988)

pre-school children	75%
mild	46%
moderate	25%
serious	4%

Education

Illiteracy Rate (1990)	53%
(other sources indicate 60-75%)	
Primary School Enrollment (1991)	44%
Percentage of gr. 1 enrollment reaching final grade of primary school (1988)	9%

Sources: *Social Indicators of Economic Development, A World Bank Book.* International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/ World Bank. John Hopkins University Press. 1992; *Health Conditions in the Americas. Volume II.* Pan American Health Organization, 1990; *The State of the World's Children 1994.* United Nations Children's Fund. Oxford University Press.1994; *World Bank Development Report,* 1994.

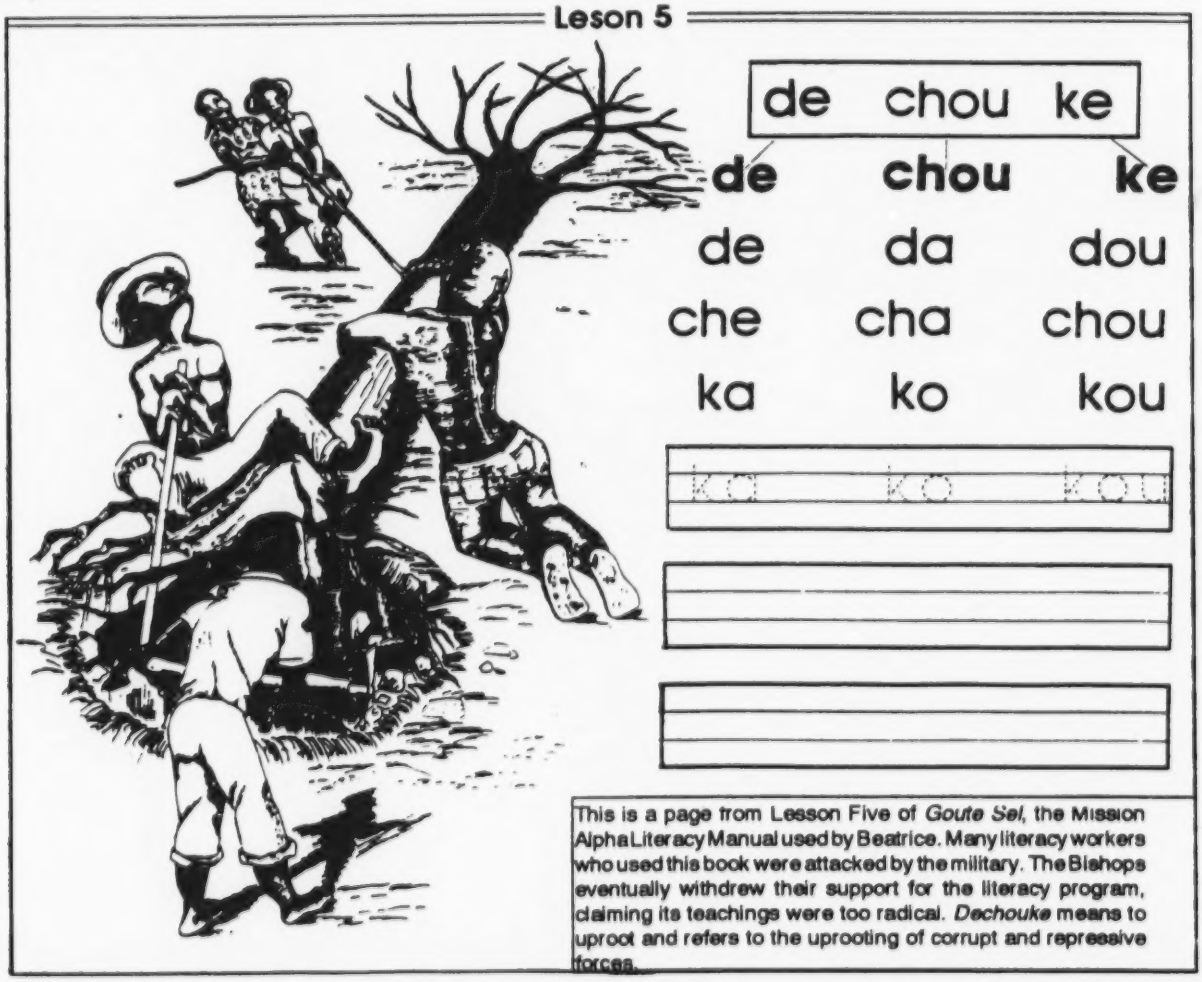
Beatrice: High School Student

I grew up in the "*ti bourgeoisie*" class, and for us life isn't really privileged. We don't suffer from lack of food or shelter, but we don't have extra each month to do many things. In Haiti, there is a big difference between the "*ti bourgeoisie*" and the bourgeoisie. The bourgeoisie are the ones with the big homes and fancy cars. They can afford to eat in restaurants and travel. We don't have a car or even running water in the house.

So when I became involved in the struggle to liberate Haiti, I was not rebelling against my class. Instead, I was trying to improve the situation for those even less fortunate than me. It is more a concept of redistribution, because the wealthy here have everything and the poor have absolutely nothing.

I've always been called a rebel at home or in school. I remember once I was chosen by the school to be the flagbearer in the annual flag-day parade. I refused, saying that I'll never set foot in the National Palace yard. The principal told me that it was the least I could do, to pay back the government for giving me a free education. I had to do it, but when I got to the grounds of the Palace yard, I gave the flag to someone else.

In 1986, I decided to drop out of school for a while. This was the time that everyone was looking for a way to change things in Haiti. People were willing to stop what they were doing and get involved in liberating the country. We finally had freedom to organize, freedom for the press. We



This is a page from Lesson Five of *Goute Sel*, the Mission Alpha Literacy Manual used by Beatrice. Many literacy workers who used this book were attacked by the military. The Bishops eventually withdrew their support for the literacy program, claiming its teachings were too radical. *Dechouke* means to uproot and refers to the uprooting of corrupt and repressive forces.

wanted to take advantage of this new opening.

That's why, along with other young people of mixed economic background, we founded a group called Solidarity with Youth (SAJ) at St. Jean Bosco Church. We formed this group to help. Now we have local branches in Les Cayes, Verette, Jacmel and other places in the country.

We work towards social justice—to make Haiti a place where everyone can find food, health care, good education, and a decent place to live. We want to put an end to the old order of things where only a small group of people own everything.

Beatrice and other members of her group worked with a church sponsored adult literacy program called Mission Alpha.

When people got interested in Mission Alpha, it opened their eyes to problems existing at the very core of the Catholic Church. It opened their eyes not only to the church, but also the other big institutions that control the country, like the military. The Bishops felt threatened and ended the program. Now they want to resume it but on one condition: that the program limit itself to teaching people to read without mentioning their everyday social and economic situation.

We want to put an end to the old order of things where only a small group of people own everything.

I dedicated my body and soul to this program. So I can't find words to explain how hurt I felt when the Bishops stopped it. I felt that some light I had inside which was motivating me had died. My only hope was that the people who benefited from the program would pressure the government to continue it.

Before Jean-Claude Duvalier left the country, when we founded the group in St. Jean Bosco Church, I felt pressure from my family, mostly my mother. She was scared for me, scared that I would be killed by some trigger-happy Tonton Macoute. My mother used to tell me that what she spent for my education was a waste, and then burst into tears.

Now things are a little better. She sees things differently than she did a couple years ago.

Before, when I went out with my friends, I thought dressing up and looking sharp was really important. I had to wear a different outfit each time I went out. When I dressed up, I felt like somebody. Now, I can go two or three months without new clothes, and I still feel like a person.

There are so many people who don't have food, who have to go without the absolute basic necessities. Where I used to spend money on material things like clothes, today I spend what little extra I have differently—like buying pencils and paper, that can aid people to gain literacy.

For each of us it's an individual fight that we can only win by working together. My hope is that the people will finally organize themselves, forget their minor differences and work together to win the fight.

Beatrice was interviewed by Kathie Klarreich in Port-au-Prince in 1989.

Fatil and Ayiti: Youth in Haiti

Children are hardest hit by the poverty in Haiti. Thousands migrate to the capital, Port-au-Prince, in search of work. Large numbers of children become domestic servants in the city and others, such as Fatil and Ayiti, are sold into slavery to cut sugar cane in the neighboring Dominican Republic.

FATIL, age 18

Life in Haiti is good for the wealthy and sorrowful for the poor. What the poor people are going through is comparable to being born a slave. Where else do you find thousands of kids sleeping in the streets, knowing they will wake up in the morning without a *gourde* [20 cents] to buy food? When we try and work in the streets cleaning cars, the wealthy people only look down on us.

One day, a friend of ours came to see us, a guy named Jean Marc. He promised to take us to the capital of the Dominican Republic, Santo Domingo, where he thought we could find work. We accepted because we knew there was nothing positive here for us, and we trusted him. I called Eril and Ayiti, and we went along with him.

When we got to the border, we were told to get out of the car and continue on foot. We climbed a mountain and ended up at a military station in Jimani where we had to give our names and sit and wait. Jean Marc went for some water and never came back. We never saw him again.

Then we were told we weren't going to Santo Domingo, but to a *batey* [worker camp] to cut cane. We said we couldn't do that because we didn't know how. At that point we were told we had each been sold for 75 *gourdes* to cut cane, and if we refused we would be thrown in jail. We had to agree.

We got to the *batey* and found out exactly what it was: heavy work. The leaves of the cane stalks cut us like blades. They told us if we returned to our country they would beat us, arrest us and throw us in jail.

AYITI, age 12

They gave us rice, oil, bouillion cubes, and a bit of dried fish. For work, they gave us a machete and something to sharpen it with. We had a mattress of dried grass woven together, and an empty gallon can to keep water in.

We started work every morning at 6 am, and stayed out in the hot fields until noon. Then we went back from 1 pm until 6 pm. Afterwards we washed, cooked, and collapsed on our straw mattresses.

I was smaller than the other guys, too small to do the work. I cooked for Eril and Fatil, and when they came back from cutting cane we ate together.

One day we decided we had had enough. So one by one we washed our clothes. When they were nice and clean, we put them on and escaped.

When we got to Santo Domingo, we were lost. Someone we met convinced us to stay in the Dominican Republic and work at his construction site. After a little while, I decided to leave. I wasn't making any money, and Fatil and Eril had to support me. So I said goodbye to my friends, and without even one *gourde* in my pocket, I found my way to the bus station. I waited for the right time to sneak on the bus. I didn't make it, though. The driver saw me and kicked me out. I went behind a restaurant and fell asleep.

Two Haitian men woke me up and asked what I was doing. I explained I'd been sold to cut cane and was trying to find my way back to Haiti. They had a brother who was a truck driver, and they said I could ride on the top of his big truck.

At one of the check points, the police made me get down. They said they would arrest me because I didn't have any papers, and they would throw me back in a *batey*. But I was lucky. Three other Haitians said I could hide in their big truck, and I crawled in and escaped from the station.

The officials at the border demanded to see my passport. Of course I didn't have one. I explained I'd been forced to enter the country without one, and if they didn't let me go, I'd cross the mountain in front of us on foot. I was fortunate. Someone who spoke Creole said I could cross the border without a passport, and he gave me five *gourdes*. I was so happy. I made it all the way back.

Interviews by Kathie Klarreich in Port-au-Prince in 1989.

Taste of Salt: A Story Of Modern Haiti
by Frances Temple
To learn more about the life of youth in Haiti, read this novel written for grades 5-9. Recommended by *School Library Journal*. $4 See p. 46.

Anit: Farming in a Small Village

Nestled in the hills above the town of Miragoane sits the tiny hamlet of Paillant. Most people walk the two hours back and forth to buy their goods.

Anit has lived in Paillant all of her 60-some years. You follow the small dirt road, passing Anit's sister's house, and stop just before reaching her brother's house.

Anit's property is defined by a neatly constructed fence of tree trunks bound together with twigs. You follow a narrow path that is swept every morning, and enter the *lakou*, a yard with mango, orange and avocado trees.

The house is multicolored, in typical Haitian style. The faded red and blue exterior is accented by neatly potted plants on the porch. Inside, there's a small room with two large beds, and another room that serves as both dining and living room. A small TV plays silently.

When they can, my children visit me. But life in Haiti is difficult. From Port-au-Prince to Miragoane, transportation costs 10 gourdes[$2]. Then another three gourdes from Miragoane to Paillant plus back again. My kids just don't have that kind of money.

Anit is lucky. She inherited land with her house, and it has provided her and her family an income to survive. She paid for all her children to go to school through the hard work she invested in her crops. Public school fees can cost anywhere from $5 to $75 a month, plus the additional cost of uniforms and materials.

The main crop in Anit's garden is corn, and she also grows beans and peas. Even though they are high in the mountains, it's too hot to plant other cash crops, such as onions, carrots and potatoes.

This year, my corn is dying because of the drought. In a good year, I can harvest 50 mamit [cans] at 10 gourdes per mamit. In a bad year, I may only harvest 10.

When she needed cash, Anit used to be able to sell her black Haitian pigs for up to $150 each. But several years ago, U.S. government agencies organized the slaughter of all Haitian pigs because of a swine fever epidemic. In spite of the Haitian government's promise to reimburse the peasants, Anit never received a dime for her four pigs they killed.

She did, however, hide one of her pigs, and hopes that this one will produce piglets. Anit also has chickens which lay eggs. She has a goat, but is waiting to fatten him up before she eats or sells him.

Anit is up at five every morning. She starts with household chores, helped by a young girl and boy who work for her in exchange for room and board. Anit's kitchen is a small grass hut beside the red and blue house, a common arrangement for rural Haitian households. Water is carried from a well ten minutes away.

The family normally eats corn, rice or millet, with the occasional addition of beef or goat meat which she buys wrapped up in leaves, from a neighbor.

When times are rough, like now, we eat soup made from water, some kind of leafy greens, a banana, and dumplings made from flour and water. We wash the pots and pans with water and scrub them with oranges and leaves to get them clean.

But I am never discouraged. I wake up every morning and pray. I ask for strength and endurance. I'm Catholic and go to church every Sunday, but I believe in vodou too. If someone gets sick, I go to the herbal doctor first, because the regular doctor charges $5 just for a consultation, and then you have to have cash to buy medicine. They don't give credit.

I'm waiting for times to get better. We don't have anything left to lose now, so what can we do? I am lucky, I've led a good life, and I have nine healthy children and more than ten healthy grandchildren. And I still have my land. Not everyone in Haiti can say that.

Prepared by Kathie Klarreich from interviews conducted in Port-au-Prince in 1989.

Fifi: Raising a Family in the City

Fifi moved from the southern town of Jeremie when she was thirteen. With barely enough money to feed themselves, the family could not afford to send Fifi to school. As a result, she never learned to read or write.

Although rural life was hard, life in Port-au-Prince is anything but easy for Fifi. She, her husband Jean-Paul and their five children live in a one-room house.

The house has electricity, but Fifi has to walk to a public tap to get water. There is one bed, a chair and a television, but no table, fan or radio. They pay $150 in rent every six months, plus $3 per month for electricity.

Fifi's husband used to do masonry, repairing and cleaning for an apartment building, earning $60 a month. But he has recently been fired. Now he earns only small amounts washing cars, and the family depends on Fifi's income.

I am responsible for taking care of my whole family. And all I am earning is $15 a month. I wash Mr. Pierre's clothes once a week, and in the mornings I clean his house. I used to have more jobs doing the same thing for other people, at $30 per job. But those people have moved away, and here I am, stuck with almost nothing.

Sometimes I make peanut butter to get a little extra money on the side. There are times when I don't even have enough money to buy the peanuts. Usually I buy two mamits[cans], which costs about $2.80 and is enough to make two jars. I have to pay someone 20 cents to roast the nuts, and at least another 20 cents to use their grinder. If I'm lucky, though, I can sell the peanut butter for $2 per jar.

We eat mostly rice, beans and corn. A mamit of rice costs about $3, beans $4, and corn $1.30. One mamit lasts about three days. A gallon of cooking oil is $4 or $5, and then we spend about $10 a month on charcoal for a cooking fire. Plus there are the daily things we need to put in the food, like spices, salt, garlic and bouillon cubes. Occasionally I buy a chicken in the market for $3 or $4 but we don't splurge like that very often.

Fifi is not sure if she will be able to continue to send her children to school.

It's not just school fees. There are uniforms which cost $7 and right now they each have only one; even if it is dirty, they have to wear it. Then there are supplies—notebooks cost 40 cents each, erasers and sharpeners 30 cents, pens 20 cents, and pencils 10 cents.

Plus I have to pack them lunch. That's at least another $20 a month. If I don't have money to give them for lunch that day, I won't let them go to school. I refuse to have them beg.

Prepared by Kathie Klarreich based on interviews conducted in Port-au-Prince in 1989.

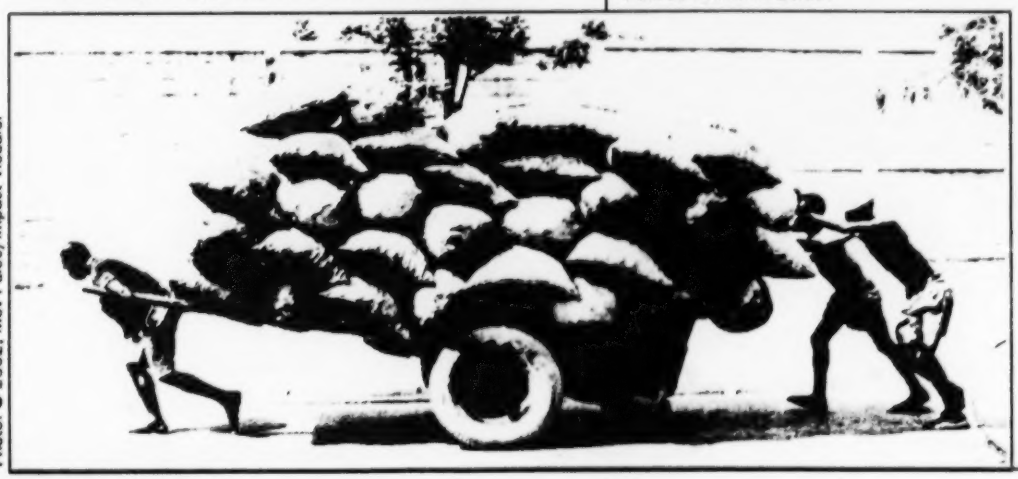


Photo: © 1992, Mev Puleo/Impact Visuals.

Port-au-Prince: Men pulling carts filled with bags of charcoal. The minimum wage in Haiti is $3 a day–these men often earn a lot less. It is said they have a lifespan of only 7 years after they begin this work due to the strain to their bodies.

-Pierre: Political Refugee Denied Asylum-

For over a hundred years, Haitians have endured some of the most brutal human rights abuses in the Western Hemisphere. Some of the worst cases of abuse have been recorded within the last several decades. The Duvaliers (1957-1986) executed and exiled thousands of people. Their own police force, the Tontons Macoutes, carried out the genocide against any organized opposition.

Haiti's human rights record improved dramatically under President Aristide. However, after the coup in 1991, the de facto government immediately launched a campaign of violent repression. Reported human rights violations include torture and short-term arbitrary arrests without warning accompanied by severe beatings.

The military and police forces have systematically targeted President Aristide supporters, especially in the rural areas. Among the most severely repressed are the women's groups, peasant development groups, trade unions, church groups and youth movements. An estimated 200,000 people are in hiding.

Those who have attempted to flee the country, have faced the additional risk of detention at Guantánamo, or being returned to Haiti by the U.S. Coast Guard. Attorney Catherine Cassidy participated in the March 1992 Pax Christi USA team researching human rights violations in Haiti since the coup. While there, she interviewed Pierre, a Haitian repatriated from Guantánamo, now in hiding in Port-au-Prince.

I am twenty-one years old. I was very active supporting Aristide. The voting bureau was at my house. The military was all over our neighborhood after the coup d'etat on September 30. A group of soldiers came to my house on October 1. The soldiers asked for me and my sister told them I was not home. When they started to search the house I fled out the back. I knew they were killing people who took a stand for Aristide. I hid for two months in a place south of Port-au-Prince. The situation did not improve with the military—they were asking for me by name—so I knew I had to leave the country. About December 13, I took a boat with 18 others and was picked up by the US Coast Guard.

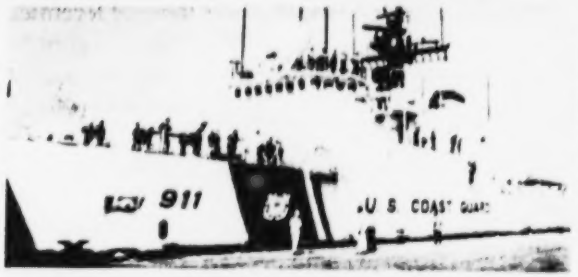


Photo: Haiti Progrès

My brother, Paul was with me on Guantanamo. I was interviewed on December 19 and 27. My impression of Guantanamo was one of disorganization. People did not have control. I told the woman interviewer what had happened to me. She spoke Creole but not very well. The Immigration promised to call me and said my, interview was good. When I was called, it was to return to Haiti.

On February 3, 1992, the Coast Guard took me and many others to Port-au-Prince. I was very afraid because there were soldiers around and they took our pictures and fingerprints. At the port, a TV crew from World Monitor TV Boston asked me how I felt. I did not feel comfortable talking to them with the military around. I was afraid of them but they said I could trust them so I let them take me to my house. They filmed me and my family in my home and outside with their cameras. Many people came around because of the TV crew and van. I got very nervous. The TV journalists gave me a letter with their phone number and left.

Shortly after, two soldiers came and asked me where I had been. I said in Cap Haitian. They said I was lying and that they would be back. I left because I knew I could not sleep in my house anymore. I called the TV journalists and they took me to their hotel. That night the military came to my home. They beat my mother, sister and niece because they were *Lavalas*. They asked for me but could not find me.

Since then my family has left the house. My brother Paul who was also later returned to Haiti has disappeared. He met with my mother in hiding but has not been heard from since. I am afraid he could be dead because he would have contacted my mother by now.

Source: *A Dream Deferred: Human Rights in Haiti.* A Joint Report by Pax Christi USA, Global Exchange, Leadership Conference of Women Religious, Washington Office on Haiti, Witness for Peace. March/April 1992.

—Lily Cérat: Haitian-American Teacher—

Haitians abroad have played a dynamic role in Haiti's political, economic and cultural life. Here we learn about the experiences of one Haitian immigrant in New York, home of the largest population of Haitians outside Haiti.

Marie Lily Cérat is a mother, a first grade teacher at P.S. 189, and an activist in Brooklyn's Haitian community. She spoke to NECA about why she came to the United States, about what being Haitian means to her, and about her dream of freedom and democracy for her homeland.

Photo Credit © 1992 Donna DeCesare/Impact Visuals

Ms. Cérat teaches 1st grade Haitian and African-American students. Many of their lessons are in Creole. Did you know that after English and Spanish, Creole is the most common language spoken by students in New York public schools?

Why did you leave Haiti?

Both political and economic motives were entangled in our departure. My father came in 1968 during Papa Doc's dictatorship when men his age were persecuted and killed for trying to better their future. My mother came in 1978. Three years later, when I was 19, I too came to New York.

How is life in New York compared to Haiti?

In New York you live indoors spiritually, you are afraid of the next person, afraid of your neighbors. At first, I was very homesick. It was meeting old friends among our large, closely knit Haitian community that kept me going.

We all complain about the winter. The first winter is very harsh, but every time it comes you feel terrible.

I discovered prejudice in New York. I was fired from my first job at an Arby's restaurant when they found out I was from Haiti.

What impact do Haitian immigrants to the United States have on Haiti ?

Haiti relies greatly on the diaspora in New York, Miami, Montreal and also in Europe. One reason is economic. The money that we send back to our families is the backbone of the economy. But politically we have also helped. During both Duvalier dictatorships many of our journalists and activists from the opposition relocated and continued their work from here. So people in our community are informed.

The protest marches we have held, especially since the coup d'état against Aristide, have played an important role in pressuring U.S. politicians.

Have you noticed any changes in the Haitian immigrant community since you've come here?

The political views and the life of the immigrant community have expanded since Aristide first came on the scene. Aristide has always spoken Creole. All Haitians speak and understand Creole. [Only 10% speak French.] Since the coup the politicians are using the old tactics to marginalize the people. They are using French in the Parliament and to address the nation.

Aristide raised people's consciousness both here and in Haiti. The people cannot be put off in a corner by the politicians. They want a leader who speaks their language, who communicates.

In your school, what do you teach children about the people of Haiti?

I teach them that we are a determined people, we are proud and honest. I know that other people have these characteristics too, but we are strong like trees and we are self-assured. We are intelligent even when we are illiterate. Despite the odds against us in Haiti and in New York we have tremendous intuitive gifts for survival. As a child I never knew my mother was illiterate because her other senses gave her the information the written words couldn't. And I know, I really know, that eventually Haiti will be for Haitians and Haiti will be free.

Marie Yolette Val
Community Organizer

Marie Yolette Val is the director of the League of Haitian Families in Cambridge.

I am the only child of my mother who was a seamstress. I did all kinds of work around the house. I used to wash clothes, do laundry, clean the house. My mother wouldn't let me do that on weekdays, but on Saturdays I always had something to do in the house. It made me feel as though I was somebody.

We did the clothes by hand, with soap. And there was a funny way to do it. I liked to rub the clothes and make a funny noise when you press it to get the water off. It was fun. In Cap-Haitien, where I was born, there was running water in one building in the neighborhood, but not in our house.

Then I moved with my father in Port-au-Prince, and my mother stayed in the north in Cap-Haitien. In Haiti, the economy was getting worse and worse in the rural areas. It was getting harder to get jobs and to educate the children living in a small town. My father was a teacher and a school principal; and then he [opened] a produce store.

I loved school. That was one thing I always liked. I don't know why, but I really stuck to it. When I couldn't go to school, I would cry. I think I liked not so much the teachers, but what I was learning. I liked to learn new things. My favorite subject was language.

I learned embroidery. In Haiti, every Friday, all schools have embroidery class for the girls. The boys have something else. You start in the first grade and learn it all through elementary school. They show you a pattern and give you a needle and thread and a piece of fabric. They always have some older students come and help. I loved it.

I started doing embroidery on my own. People came for sheets, tablecloths, hand towels and pillow cases. And dresses, too. I would get five dollars for a sheet. I spent my money for things like barrettes for my hair and all kinds of stuff. I bought things that my mother wouldn't think about or I wouldn't ask my mother for.

So in Haiti, you learn embroidery in school. But the problem is that not everyone got to go to school. A lot of the people who go to school don't spend more than two years. In the rural areas, most of the people don't go to school. It's only lately that they have built more schools in the countryside.

When I finished college, I taught for about two years [before I began] to train teachers. I was experimenting with new curriculum for schools. We were doing a lot of research on psychology and language to reform the school system.

That is what I was working on before I came here. I didn't plan to come here at the time I came; it was sort of premature...

I was getting some threats. I was [also] working on a radio station and I was getting anonymous phone calls. This guy from the government used to come to our radio show every Saturday. He would be sitting there saying, "The government is good. The government is working for the advancement of the country. There is a lot of progress."

But the truth is that the country was regressing from the time that government came into power. So the person who was on the controls and I put him on "audio." Do you know what that means? There's a system in a radio station where someone might be speaking on the microphone but you don't send it over the air. He had a headphone on and heard it as though his voice was being broadcast. We sent music out and kept his voice in. And I think they found out that we weren't putting him on.

At certain points my parents were very scared for me. I think they were right because I came here in February of 1980 and in November 1980 there were plenty of people from the radio station who had died or were in prison. One of my collaborators from the radio station is in prison there. He and I were on a job for about three months.

Reprinted with permission from *Common Threads*, a publication of the Oral History Project, 25 West Street 2nd Flr, Boston, MA 02111, 617-423-2722. The Oral History Project has a interviews with women from many backgrounds living in the Boston area and also excellent publications for schools on how to prepare, conduct and publish interviews.

—The Konbit: Working Together—

In West Africa, most people live by farming the land. But clearing a field, planting a crop, or bringing in a harvest is often too much work for one family. As a result, many African societies have forms of cooperative labor. When a member of the community needs help with a task, he or she calls for volunteers. Neighbors come together to do the job, and the host, for whom the work is performed, provides food and drink for all. There is plenty of singing, joking and feasting, as well as hard work.

After slavery ended in the Caribbean, many Afro-Caribbean people became farmers. They continued the African tradition of work exchange, which goes by different names in different parts of the Caribbean. In Jamaica it is called "day work," "work sport" or "digging match." In Tobago it is "lend-hand," and in Trinidad "gayap." In Grenada it is a "maroon."

In Haiti the tradition is called a "konbit." It is so important to Haitian rural life that it is even featured in folktales and literature, such as the following excerpt from Haiti's classic novel, Masters of the Dew *by J. Roumain. Here we see how the konbit tradition has been a source of strength and unity for Haitian rural communities.*

Masters of the Dew

(excerpt)

In those days when they all had lived in harmony, united as the fingers of the hand, they had assembled all the neighborhood in collective coumbites for the harvest or the clearing.

Ah, what coumbites! Bienaimé mused.

At break of day he was there, an earnest leader with his group of men, all hard-working farmers: Dufontain, Beauséjour, cousin Aristhène, Pierrilis, Dieudonné, brother-in-law Mérilien, Fortuné Jean, wise old Boirond, and the work-song leader, Simidor Antoine, a man with a gift for singing...

Into the field of wild grass they went, bare feet in the dew. Pale sky, cool, the chant of wild guinea hens in the distance. Little by little the shadowy trees, still laden with shreds of darkness, regained their color. An oily light bathed them. A kerchief of sulphur-colored clouds bound the summits of the mountains. The countryside emerged from sleep. In Rosanna's yard the tamarind tree suddenly let fly a noisy swirl of crows like a handful of gravel.

Casamajor Beaubrun with his wife, Rosanna, and their two sons would greet them. They would start out with "Thank you very much brothers" since a favor is willingly done: today I work your field, tomorrow you work mine. Cooperation is the friendship of the poor.

A moment later Siméon and Dorisca, with some twenty husky men, would join the group. Then they would all leave Rosanna bustling around in the shade of the tamarind tree among her boilers and big tin pots whence the voluble sputtering of boiling water would already be rising. Later Délira and other women neighbors would come to lend her a hand.

Off would go the men with hoes on shoulder... Lowering the fence poles at the entrance to a plot of land where an ox skull for a scarecrow blanched on a pole, they measured their job at a glance--a tangle

of wild weeds intertwined with creepers. But the soil was good and they would make it as clean as a table top. This year Beaubrun wanted to try eggplant.

"Line up!" the squadron chiefs would yell.

Then Simidor Antoine would throw the strap of his drum over his shoulder. Bienaimé would take his commanding position in front of his men. Simidor would beat a brief prelude, and the rhythm would crackle under his fingers. In a single movement, they would lift their hoes high in the air. A beam of light would strike each blade. For a second they would be holding a rainbow.

Photo: Mev Puleo/Impact Visuals

Simidor's voice rose, husky and strong...The hoes fell with a single dull thud, attacking the rough hide of the earth...

The men went forward in a straight line. They felt Antoine's song in their arms and, like blood hotter than their own, the rapid beat of his drum.

Suddenly the sun was up. It sparkled like a dewy foam across the field of weeds. Master Sun! Honor and respect, Master Sun! We black men greet you with a swirl of hoes snatching bright sparks of fire from the sky. There are the breadfruit trees patched with blue, and the flame of the flamboyant tree long smoldering under the ashes of night, but now bursting into a flare of petals on the edge of the thorn acacias...

There sprang up a rhythmic circulation between the beating heart of the drum and the movements of the men. The rhythm became a powerful flux penetrating deep into their arteries and nourishing their muscles with a new vigor...

The high-class people in the city derisively called these peasants "...barefooted vagabonds..." (They are too poor to buy shoes.) But never mind and to hell with them! Some day we will take our big flat feet out of the soil and plant them on their behinds.

They had done a tough job, scratched, scraped, and shaved the hairy face of the field. The injurious brambles were scattered on the ground. Beaubrun and his sons would gather them up and set fire to them. What had been useless weeds, prickles, bushes entangled with tropical creepers, would change now to fertilizing ashes in the tilled soil. Beaubrun was overjoyed.

"Thanks, neighbors!" he kept repeating.

"You're welcome, neighbor!" we replied, but hurriedly, for dinner was ready. And what a dinner!...In the cauldrons, the casseroles, and the bowls were stacked with barbecued pig seasoned hot enough to take your breath away, ground corn with codfish, and rice, too, sun rice with red beans and salt pork, bananas, sweet potatoes, and yams to throw away!

Abridged from: Roumain, J. (1944). *Masters of the Dew.*NH: Heinemann, Inc.

Konbit's West African Roots

The Haitian cooperative work group has much in common with European and American husking and barn-building parties; but also has many non-European characteristics. The rhythmic, synchronized use of the hoe, the singing leader and the musicians who stand to one side to "encourage" the workers, the calling of the workers by drum rappels, the special consideration for the sick, and the concept of long-term community endeavor are all of West African origin. The konbit is the legitimate descendant of the Dahomean dokpwe, the kurum of the Mambila (Cameroons), the Ku of the Kpelle (Liberia) and other West African cooperative systems.

From: Courlander, H. (1960.) *The Drum and the Hoe: Life and Lore of the Haitian People.* University of California Press.

Poetry

The Grand Guignol of Countries or Country of The Grand Guignol

Paul Laraque

the circus and its clowns
the theatre and its marionettes
the carnival and its masks
the zoo and its monkeys
the arena and its bulls
the slaughterhouse and its black beef
the yankee and the money wheel
the native and the wheel of blood
voodoo and its grand Dons
the holy family and its demons
the people and their misery
exile and its saviors
without faith without law
Haiti and its cross
Haiti in hell
in the name of the father
and of the son
and of the zombi

•translated by Rosemary Manno

Le grand guignol du pays ou Le pays du grand guignol

Paul Laraque

le cirque et ses clowns
le théâtre et ses marionnettes
le carnaval et ses masques
le zoo et ses singes
l'arène et ses taureaux
l'abattoir et ses boeufs noirs
le yankee et la roue de l'argent
le indigène et la roue du sang
le vodou et ses grands *Dons*
la sainte famille et ses démons
le peuple et ses malheurs
l'exil et ses sauveurs
sans foi ni loi
Haïti et sa croix
Haïti en enfer
au nom du père
du fils
et du zombi

Born in Haiti in 1920, **Paul Laraque** lived in exile in New York from 1961 to 1986. In 1964, he was deprived of his Haitian citizenship. He won the Casa de las Américas Prize for poetry in 1979. Former secretary general of the Association of Haitian Writers Abroad, he is the author of several books in French and Creole, some of which have been translated into Spanish and French. His book *Camourade* was published by Curbstone in 1988.

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Haitian Folktales

In West Africa, storytelling was a richly developed art. Villagers would gather around a fire at night to hear one of their neighbors—perhaps an old woman or man—tell favorite tales. Many of these involved animal characters, such as the spider Anansi. Stories often told of a practical joke or trick, or sought to explain how a certain thing began.

Africans transported to the Caribbean, including Haiti, brought their folk traditions with them. These blended with elements of European folklore to become part of the cultural heritage of Caribbean peoples.

Many Haitian folktales center on two characters, Uncle Bouki and Ti Malice. Uncle Bouki is a laughable bumpkin—foolish, boastful and greedy. Ti Malice is his opposite, a smart character full of tricks. These same qualities are found combined in Anansi the spider, the hero of many Caribbean folktales. In Haiti, they are divided between the two characters of Uncle Bouki and Ti Malice.

Haiti's oral tradition also includes many other types of stories, proverbs, riddles, songs and games. Storytelling in Haiti is a performance art. The storyteller uses different voices for each character in the story, and often sings a song as part of the narrative.

UNCLE BOUKI GETS WHEE-AI

Uncle Bouki went down to the city to market, to sell some yams, and while he was there he got hungry. He saw an old man squatting by the side of the road, eating something. The old man was enjoying his food tremendously, and Bouki's mouth watered. Bouki tipped his hat and said to the old man, "Where can I get some of whatever you are eating?" But the old man was deaf. He didn't hear a word Bouki said. Bouki asked him then, "What do you call that food?" Just then the old man bit into a hot pepper, and he said loudly, "Whee-ai!" Bouki thanked him and went into the market. He went everywhere asking for five centimes worth of whee-ai. The people only laughed. Nobody had any whee-ai.

He went home thinking about whee-ai. He met Ti Malice on the way. Ti Malice listened to him and said, "I will get you some whee-ai."

Malice went down and got some cactus leaves. He put them in a sack. He put some oranges on top of the cactus leaves. He put a pineapple on top. Then a potato. Then he brought the sack to Bouki.

Bouki reached in and took out a potato. "That's no whee-ai," he said. He reached in and took out a pineapple. "That's no whee-ai," Bouki said. He reached in and took out oranges. "That's no whee-ai," he said. Then he reached way to the bottom and grabbed cactus leaves. The needles stuck into his hand. He jumped into the air. He shouted, "Whee-ai!"

"That's your whee-ai," Malice said.

Reprinted from Courlander, H. (1960). *The Drum and the Hoe: Life and Lore of the Haitian People*. University of California Press.

Vendors at the provincial market place in Port-au-Prince. The artist is studying architecture at the University of Port-au-Prince.

The President Wants No More of Anansi

Anansi and all his smart ways irritated the President so much that the President told him one day: "Anansi, I'm tired of your foolishness. Don't you ever let me see your face again." So Anansi went away from the palace. And a few days later he saw the President coming down the street, so he quickly stuck his head into the open door of a limekiln.

Everyone on the street took off their hats when the President passed. When he came to the limekiln, he saw Anansi's behind sticking out.

An artist's impression of Anansi.

He became angry and said, "*Ki bounda sa ki pa salye mwen?*" (Whose behind is it that doesn't salute me?)

Anansi took his head out of the limekiln and said, "*Se bounda 'Nansi ki pa salye ou.*" (It's Anansi's behind which didn't salute you.)

The President said angrily, "Anansi, you don't respect me."

Anansi said: "President, I was just doing what you told me to do. You told me never to let you see my face."

The President said, "Anansi, I've had enough of your foolishness. I don't ever want to see you again, clothed or naked."

So Anansi went away. But the next day when he saw the President coming down the street he took his clothes off and put a fishnet over his head.

When the president saw him he shouted, "Anansi, didn't I tell you I never wanted to see you again clothed or naked?"

And Anansi said, "My President, I respect what you tell me. I'm not clothed and I'm not naked."

This time the President told him, "Anansi, if I ever catch you again on Haitian soil I'll have you shot."

So Anansi boarded a boat and sailed to Jamaica. He bought a pair of heavy shoes and put sand in them. Then he put the shoes on his feet and took another boat back to Haiti. When he arrived at Port-au-Prince he found the President standing on the pier.

"Anansi," the President said sternly, "Didn't I tell you that if I ever caught you on Haitian soil again I'd have you shot?"

"You told me that, Papa, and I respected what you said. I went to Jamaica and filled my shoes with sand. So I didn't disobey you because I'm now walking on English soil."

limekiln: furnace for making lime by burning limestone or shells

Port-au-Prince: capital of Haiti

English soil: Jamaica was still a colony of England when the story was told

Reprinted from: Courlander, H. (1960.) *The Drum and the Hoe: Life and Lore of the Haitian People.* University of California Press. Graphic courtesy of P. Hyacinth Galloway.

—Vodou: A Haitian Way of Life—

- What do you know about Vodou?
- What stereotypes about Vodou practices are typical in the United States?

Discuss these questions. Review your answers after you read these two articles which introduce us to the history and practrice of Vodou. Additional readings are suggested in the resource guide.

Vodou in Haiti

By Donald Cosentino

Scholars now call the African-derived religion of Haiti Vodou, which means "spirit" in the Fon language. Fon people live in the West African country of Benin. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, many Fon, along with Yoruba and Ibo people from neighboring Nigeria, Kongo people from Zaire and Angola in central Africa, and other African ethnic groups, were forced into slavery and sent to the French colony that would become Haiti.

Although these people came from different cultures, they shared many religious traditions. They all revered a god who was the maker of all things. Because the distance between this supreme god and humans was very great, Africans also honored spirits who were less powerful than this god but more powerful than humans. These spirits included ancestors of the living, spirits of twins, and other spiritual beings who represented forces of nature (i.e. the ocean, sky, sun, lightning, and forests) or human emotions (i.e. love, anger, mercy, laughter, and grief).

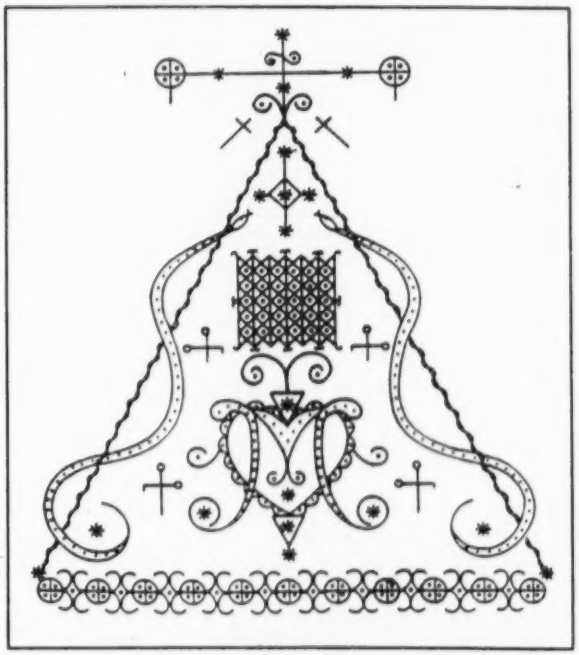
In time, the slaves combined these common beliefs into one religion. They called the supreme being Bondye (from the Creole words for "good god") and identified Bondye with the Christian creator. Since Bondye was far away, they called on ancestral and twin spirits who lived nearby for supernatural help. Nonmortal spirits gathered together from many African religions are called *lwa*. They are thought to be very concerned with human welfare and are called upon to solve problems. There are hundreds of *lwa*, but the most famous include the kind and fatherly snake spirit Damballah; Ogun, a forceful military spirit; Erzuli, the queen of love and beauty; and Guede, a gross trickster who lives in graveyards but also loves and cares for children.

Because the *lwa* are close to humans, they enjoy human hospitality. Therefore, during a Vodou ceremony, the people may sacrifice a small farm animal, often a chicken or goat, to them. Afterward, the worshippers cook and eat the animal. To attract more divine attention, servants of the *lwa* draw special emblems, called *veve*, on the floors of the *hounfors* (Vodou temples) and dance and sing their favorite songs.

The *lwa* communicate with their servants through a spiritual possession of their minds and bodies. Spirit possession is common in many religions throughout the world, including the Pentecostal and Holiness churches in the United States. In Haiti, it is said that the *lwa* ride their servants like horses and sometimes are called divine horsemen. When a worshiper is being ridden, he or she speaks and acts like the *lwa*... Afterward, the person who was possessed cannot remember the experience.

The Haitian Revolution began in 1791 during a secret Vodou service when the slaves vowed to free

Continued on page 39, column 2.



Veve Drawing

From: Ferere, Gerard Alphonse. (1989.) *LeVodouisme Haitien/Haitian Vodouism.* Philadelphia: St. Joseph's University Press. Bilingual Edition.

Music and Vodou

By Ronald Derenoncourt

*Haitian musician **Ronald Derenoncourt (Aboudja)** plays in a musical group called* Sanba Yo, *which draws inspiration from the singing and drumming of Vodou services. In the following interview, he explains why he believes that Vodou is indeed "more than a religion"—it is a foundation of Haiti's way of life.*

For three years, Aboudja and fellow musicians conducted research on Vodou. We learned to gather about the people, the rhythms, rituals—not as tourists, but by spending months at a time with them. We came as students, and they were our teachers. I was arrested 27 times during my research. This was during the Duvalier regime, up until 1986.

In 1986, they formed the musical group Sanba Yo. Sanba, an indigenous word used by the Indians who lived on this island, means musician. Every member of Sanba Yo is involved in Vodou. *In vodou there is a spirit called the lwa.* The *lwa* is not a spirit in the Catholic sense, it is the energy that we keep locked inside ourselves. With the help of the music and the singing, we liberate that energy.

The slaves came here from all over Africa. Although they were forced to speak a certain way, adopt European names, and submit to baptism, they never forgot their culture. At night, they kept dreaming about freedom.

Many slaves fled the plantations, and these "maroons" created camps in the mountains. But they came from different ethnic groups, different cultural and religious backgrounds. In the maroon camps, in order to survive, they had to get together to work the land, practice their religion, and live. They needed a consensus, and that way of life was Vodou.

Vodou gave us our independence. It's the only resistant force we have in this country. It's the only force that really can resist cultural attacks from outsiders. Vodou is more than just a religion—it's really a way of life. Vodou is the fuel of this country.

There is a class of people in Haiti who have houses and cars; they are well off. But they are not patriotic about the history or culture of their country. Sure, they listen to our music and they like it, but they hear it as exotic music, like an American would.

Cosentino, Continued from previous page.

themselves. Ever since, Vodou has been a vital part of Haitian history. Pictures of Catholic saints are painted on *hounfor* walls to represent the *lwa*. Catholic prayers and symbols are used in Vodou ceremonies. Ceremonial costumes, rituals, and designs are copied from the Free and Accepted Masons, a secret fraternity. Through these "recyclings," Vodou has helped African people to survive slavery and to make sense of their lives in the "New World." Vodou is a religion of tolerance. It has kept alive old African beliefs and borrowed freely from European traditions.

Not everyone in Haiti practices Vodou. Some Haitians are opposed to the religion, and followers of Vodou have often been persecuted by the government. But the new Haitian Constitution recognizes Vodou as the inheritance of all Haitians, and there is a growing appreciation in the United States of the influence of Vodou on our own culture. Vodou music has inspired American jazz and rock'n'roll. Paintings by Vodou artists such as Hector Hyppolite and Andre Pierre are now recognized as treasures of world art. If we put aside our negative stereotypes about "voodoo," we will see Vodou as an important and exciting expression of African culture in the New World.

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The radio stations in Haiti don't play our music. There are just a few stations which begrudgingly give two hours a day for Vodou music. The people who control the radio must be interested in destroying their own culture, or they would play more traditional music. They are encouraging the city people to care more about Michael Jackson than about their own music.

Our mission is to publicize our music; that's why we sometimes have to go abroad. But we wouldn't mind staying here and playing our music for our own people, because our music belongs to them. Without them, it wouldn't exist.

Interview with Ronald Derenoncourt (Aboudja) by Kathie Klarreich, Port-au-Prince, 1989.

Songs of Resistance

Music plays an integral role in the social and religious activities of Haitian everyday life. Historically Haitian music developed through the synthesis of European and various African musical traditions. Some of the African musical characteristics are the collective quality by which the performers engage the participation of the audience, the featuring of percussion instruments, and the emphasis on improvisation. The most pervasive feature of the music is its use for social commentary. Since a majority of the population is illiterate, information and ideas are shared through music. One contemporary group that communicates its political views through music is called the ***Boukman Eksperyans.***

Boukman Eksperyans

In the aftermath of the September 1991 coup against President Aristide, Boukman Eksperyans continued to play despite censorship and intimidation. Three of their songs were banned by the military authorities in 1992 as "too violent" and radio stations were prohibited from playing them. One of these songs, *Kalfou Danjere* states that those who lie, cheat, kill, and steal will be judged at the crossroads, a place of central importance in Vodou metaphysics.

Soldiers and Macoutes are a fixture at Boukman concerts where they try to prevent the group from playing censored songs. It is thanks to the informal cassette industry in Haiti, to the support of Haitian immigrant communities abroad, and to international exposure that the voices of Boukman Eksperyans evade the efforts of authorities to silence them.

Language

A few terms in the English version of Boukman's songs are in their original Creole because they defy straightforward translation.

Ginen is derived from the name of a region of West Africa (Guinee) and has a complex set of meanings. It can be used to refer to the African homeland, to a spiritual realm where the Vodou deities live, and to a more general state of spiritual development and awareness for Haitians who practice Vodou.

Lakou. Peasant settlements in post-revolutionary Haiti were based on an African style of extended family residence around a central courtyard. This type of collective living arrangement is still practiced in much of Haiti, even in the urban areas, and is called a *lakou* or courtyard. In the songs, the *lakou* is a symbol of deep family roots and traditions, a tie to land and place, and a sense of commitment and community.

Lwa. Afro-Haitian religion recognizes a supreme deity, Bondye, and a large number of ancestral spirits and deities of natural forces and human archetypes. These deities are known as *lwa*, *miste*, or *zanj*. Some *lwa* are: **(Met) Gran Bwa** an Afro-Indian deity of the deep woods; **(Kouzen) Azaka/Zaka** an agricultural *lwa* protector of peasants and farmers.

Background

Soul in a Bottle. This is a protest against those who control others and force them to live by foreign cultural standards. The bottle refers to certain practices of *Boko*, or sorcerers, who are reputed to be able to control people by capturing their souls in bottles.

Our Ancestors. Congo, in addition to being an ethnic grouping in Haiti, is also a term used derogatorily for someone who looks like a rural mountain inhabitant. *Our Ancestors* talks of taking pride in being called Congo. They draw parallels between traditional Haitian culture and Jamaican Rastafarianism.

The above text and the following songs are from the compact disk *Kalfou Danjere* (1992) Island Records, Inc. All rights reserved. Reprinted by permission of Balenjo Music/Songs of Polygram, Inc. Tapes and C.D.s by *Boukman Ekperyans* are available in most major record stores.

Haitian Art

The February 1992 issue of *Faces: A Magazine About People* features the art and culture of Haiti for grades 4-7. Readings and hands-on activities. See *Resource Guide* for ordering information.

Cover of February issue by popular Haitian artist Julien Valéry.

Boukman Eksperyans

Photo: Steve Winter

Nanm Nan Boutèy

Anye, sa rèd o!
Anye, sa rèd o!
Nanm nou lan boutèy
Sa rèd o!

Sa rèd o!
Anye, sa rèd!

Sa rèd o wo!
Sa rèd o!

Nou bezwen pale kou moun sa yo
Nou bezwen wè kou moun sa yo
Nou bezwen tande kou moun sa yo
Nou bezwen gade kou moun sa yo

Nanm nou lan boutèy anye
Wa ayo o!

Anye sa rèd o wo wo!
Sa rèd o!

Ki lè nape rive o!
Ki lè nap pran Konsyans
Me Zanmi sa rèd o!
(Repeat) Ouyèe nan revolisyon na pwale

Lyrics by: T. Beaubrun Jr. and Mimerose Beaubrun.
© 1992 Balenjo Music/Songs of Polygram International, Inc.

Soul In a Bottle

(English Translation)

Hey, this is rough!
Hey, this is tough
Our soul in a bottle
This is tough!

This is tough!
Hey, this is tough!

This is tough!
This is really tough!

We have to speak like these people
We have to see like these people
We have to listen like these people
We have to look like these people

Our soul in a bottle
Wa ayo o!

Hey, this is tough!
This is tough!

When will we arrive
When will we take a stand
My friends this is tough!
We're going to join the revolution!

See *Teaching Ideas* for discussion questions.

Listen To Me

Chorus: Listen to me
Understand me
Listen to me
The truth is talking

The truth speaks
Children come to listen
Listen to me
A revolution is truly starting

Yes, the truth speaks
Children gather together
Listen to me
Love will truly govern
(Chorus)

Yes, the truth talks
Ginen come to listen
Listen to me
All of the Indian spirits return

Yes, the truth speaks
Three words speak
Listen to me
Oh, *ginen* will govern

Listen to me the truth speaks
A little chat speaks
The truth is talking the truth is talking
Human beings, if you're there, come to listen
(Chorus)...

For Discussion

1. Currently many political decisions are made based on what will be most financially "profitable" for business. How would the world be different if the Boukman's concept of "love" governed?
2. Boukman band says "the truth is talking." Some people would say that there is not one truth about history, but instead that there are different, equally valid perspectives. Using Haiti as an example, is there one historical truth to be known or are there two equally valid interpretations of reality?
3. Using the same chorus as in *Listen to Me*, write a song or poem about the truth of your own community or city. What do you want children to know that they might not be hearing in the traditional media?
4. The song talks about how *Ginen* will govern and Indian spirits will return. What would this mean? Would this be better? Why or why not?

Lyrics: Mimerose Beaubrun & T. Beaubrun Jr. © 1992 Songs of Polygram International, Inc. and Baterjo Music

Our Ancestors

...Our ancestors
Nago people
Vodou Congo
Natty zing, natty dread
Nago Yoruba
Wo wo wo wo wo

Our ancestors
Congo people
Our true family
Natty dread, natty zing
From the Mandingo and the Fon peoples...

Congo oh! oh! (Repeat after every line below)
Congo doesn't bother me
You'll call me Congo
to dismiss me as backwards
Congo doesn't bother me
Swearing doesn't bother me

Refrain: The Congo queen rises
Rises, rises, rises, rises

Congo oh! oh! (Repeat after every line below)
Congo doesn't bother me
You call me Congo
to dismiss me as backwards
Congo doesn't bother me
Wherever you go, you try to panic me
Congo doesn't bother me
Swearing doesn't annoy me
Congo doesn't bother me...
(Repeat refrain)

For Discussion

Two students can prepare to read the song aloud. They can ask the rest of the class to repeat "Congo oh! oh!" at the appropriate times. Then discuss:

1. What groups in your community are looked down on as poor people are in Haiti? How is this seen, e.g. insults, job discrimination. What are the categories? (e.g., race, rural vs. urban, class, gender, etc.)
2. Boukman speaks of the links between the people of Haiti and the Rastafarians in Jamaica. What links can you see between people in your own communities? Or across borders, e.g. between you and people in Haiti?
3. Share a geographic map of Africa. Why are the names of the peoples in the song who were brought as slaves not easily found on the map? Compare the colonization of Africa with the colonization of the Caribbean.

Teaching/Action Ideas

Haitian Voices

To help students (who are not Haitian themselves) develop empathy with the people of Haiti, one can begin with "interior monologues." Divide the stories in the section *Haitian Voices* among students. Ask them to write an "interior monologue" from the point of view of that person. What are their hopes and their fears? And/or, to highlight the strength of the Haitian people, show students the picture on page 25 of the people uprooting the tree. Still in the first person of their character, write how they are helping to uproot the tree. Share the stories. What image do the stories convey about the Haitian people? How does it compare to the impression we get from the media? Why? (In addition to the stories in *Haitian Voices*, students could write from the perspective of one of the characters in *Taste of Salt* or in Haitian literature. The use of interior monologues in the classroom is described in more detail in an article by Bill Bigelow and Linda Christensen called "Promoting Social Imagination Through Interior Monologues" in the 1994 Special Issue of *Rethinking Schools, Rethinking Our Classrooms*. See box on page 45.)

Bigelow and Christensen remind us that "As is true anytime we wonder about other people's lives, our monologues are only guesses, at times marred by stereotype. But the very act of considering, 'How might this person experience the situation?' develops an important 'habit of the mind' and draws us closer together."

This activity can be a good introduction to the study of Haiti. After students have shared their interior monologues, they can develop a list of things they now know about Haiti and a list of questions.

Teach Others

The best way to learn is by teaching. Students can be given a choice of how to teach others what they know about Haiti. Following are just a few suggestions:

• **Display in Hall or Library:** Prepare an educational display for the school on Haiti. Try to make the display as interactive and dynamic as possible. Imagine that you were a student from another class walking by, what would grab your attention? What would challenge your assumptions? What would make you want to learn more? What actions are you going to encourage the readers/viewers of the display to take?

• **Program:** Host a speaker or video about Haiti at your school, union or professional association. An excellent video for this purpose is **Killing the Dream**. (See *Resource Guide*.)

• **Children's Books:** There is a scarcity of good classroom materials on Haiti. Secondary students can write and illustrate books for younger children on the history of Haiti. Then arrange to visit an elementary school and read the books aloud.

• **Media Packet:** Prepare a "briefing packet" of materials on Haiti for local city and college newspapers.

• **Song, Poem or Essay:** Write a song, poem or essay. Share in a school assembly or submit to a school publication.

• **Black History:** Prepare a packet for teachers and/or students with materials about this first independent Black nation in the Americas.

At What Cost?

Following are some examples of how math lessons can help students gain insight to social realities:

(1) To examine the cost of living in Haiti and how hard people work to survive, refer to the interview with Fifi on page 29. Calculate her monthly earnings, assuming that she sells 10 *mamits* of peanut butter a month to supplement her income from housekeeping. Now calculate her monthly expenses, including rent, electricity, food, and school lunch. (Multiply the cost of the school supplies by the number of children she has and then divide by 12 months. First you will have to estimate how many pencils, pens and notebooks each child can have for the year.) Can Fifi's family survive on her income, now that her husband is out of work? If not, what are her options?

(2) Duvalier is estimated to have deposited approximately $86 million in private overseas accounts in the early 1980s. This includes funds skimmed in the processing and distribution of U.S. food aid. Given the current cost of living that you have calculated for Fifi's family, how many families could have lived on this money for a month? For a year? Refer to *Studying the Media*, in *Teaching/Action Ideas*. Taking the amount that Ron Brown was paid each month to represent the Duvalier government, how many families could have lived on this amount per month?

U.S. Foreign Policy

Simulate a Congressional Hearing on U.S. policy toward Haiti. Five students can form a Congressional Committee. The remaining students (individually or in groups) can select from the roles below and provide testimony. Their goal is to convince the Congressional committee of their recommendation for U.S. policy. To prepare, ask students to write an interior monologue from the perspective of their role. Suggest that they write about some of the most dramatic changes that have happened in their life in the last ten years and their hopes for the future. (Students can align themselves with other witnesses to coordinate testimony.)

a. Any of the people in *Haitian Voices*
b. Member of the Boukman Eksperyans band
c. A military general
d. A C.E.O. from a baseball manufacturing company
e. A policy analyst from a Conservative Think Tank
f. A once-fertile mountain
g. A street in Port-au-Prince where children live
h. The St. Jean Bosco church (See *Haiti's History.*)

To assist with the preparation of the testimony, contact any of the agencies listed below for their position statements on Haiti. (If time is limited, ask agencies to fax information.)

• Progressive: Any of the organizations on page p.47.

•Administration: Public Information Division, Rm. 5831, U.S. Department of State, Washington, DC 20520-6810, (202) 647-6575.

• Conservative and Ultra-Conservative: Heritage Foundation, Publications Dept., 214 Massachusetts Ave. NE, Washington, DC 20002, (202) 546-4400; Puebla Institute, 1319 18th St. NW, Washington, DC 20036, (202) 296-8050; The Center for Strategic and International Studies, 1800 K St., NW, #400, Wash., DC 20006, (202) 887-0200.

Music

Tapes by the Haitian performers, *Boukman Eksperyans*, are available from major record stores. On page 42, there are suggested questions for discussion for two of the songs. Following are some questions for the song on page 41, "Soul in a Bottle."

a. What other metaphors could be used for control or repression?
b. Are there family or social traditions in your neighborhood that are being "kept in a bottle"? Should they be revived or protected? Why or why not?

Racism

Students can explore how racism influences foreign policy, using Haiti as a case study. For example, in 1804, Haiti became the second nation in the Americas to declare independence from Europe. But rather than welcome this sister nation, the U.S. government refused to recognize or trade with Haiti for over 50 years. U.S. politicians were fearful of the example this independent Black nation could set for enslaved people in this country.

The following are some key periods for research: (1) Conquest (refer to Columbus' logs); (2) Trade in African peoples; (3) U.S. and French relations with Haiti immediately after the revolution; (4) United States occupation of Haiti in the early 1900s (State Department and other government officials made numerous racist statements to justify the invasion and abuse of Haitians); and (5) Current Policy:

What is the U.S. government's current policy toward Haiti? Is it racist? Representative Charles Rangel (D-N.Y.) and others argue the treatment of Haitian refugees is a racist policy. Others point out that the U.S. insistence on amnesty agreements reflects a lack of respect for the life of Haitian people. What if another country insisted that the U.S. offer amnesty to all mass murderers currently in jail. How would you feel?

The Uses of Haiti by Dr. Paul Farmer and *Haiti's Bad Press* by Dr. Robert Lawless are excellent references on this topic. See *Resource Guide.*

Studying the Media

Whose perspective is presented in your newspaper? Many major papers rely primarily on news from the State Department and other "inside the Beltway" sources or public relations firms. In an effort to "encourage" the press to print their perspective, the *de facto* Haitian coup government hired the public relations firm *Craig Shirley and Associates* to promote support for them and to discredit Aristide. The Duvalier government did the same thing. They paid Ron Brown (current U.S. Secretary of Commerce) a retainer of $12,200 a month from October of 1983 to July of 1986 to represent them in the United States.

These public relations firms put a certain "spin" on the news. For example, in the first 6 months of the coup, news on Haiti focused almost exclusively on the refugees and what we should "do about them." Rarely was there news about efforts to return the democratically elected President to his post or about the minimal refugee flow while he was in power.

The following are some suggestions of how to help students become more critical readers of the press.

(1) Ask students to read *Studying the Media* (p.17) and list the different methods used by Boston Media Action to study the press on Haiti. (i.e. recording frequency of various sources, checking for accuracy, recording number of articles which provide historical context, etc). Then, ask students what impact the post-coup coverage had on them—consciously or subconsciously. Prior to reading *Teaching About Haiti*, what was their impression of Aristide?

(2) Ask students to study the current media coverage. The questions on page 18 and the strategies they gleaned from the BMA report may be helpful. They can divide into groups to address questions one through six (p.18). Each group could share their findings with the rest of the class. Everyone should develop an analysis using question number seven about the implications of the coverage.

You can share with students a related historical example: There were similar patterns in media bias during the Spanish-American War almost 100 years ago. The media of the time omitted coverage of the forceful Cuban liberation movement in the late 1800s. So when the U.S. government proposed an invasion to help liberate Cuba from Spain, most citizens thought the choice was simply to support or oppose the invasion. American citizens never thought to lobby for a third alternative—U.S. government financial or material support for the indigenous liberation movement. They couldn't lobby for the support of forces they didn't know existed. Some say we have been forced into a similar narrow debate today with respect to Haiti.

(3) Students' findings can be shared in letters to the press and/or in a school-wide display (make charts like the ones on page 17 and 18.) Also, send copies to Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting (FAIR) and NECA (see organizations on p. 47). For additional studies of media bias, write for *Extra*, FAIR's monthly journal.

(4) Investigate who owns and funds the major newspapers and press associations. Refer to *The Media Monopoly* by B. Bagdikian (1991, Beacon Press).

Take Action

As students and teachers, there are many actions we can take to support the restoration of democracy in Haiti. These include:

a. Lobby Congress. Call or write as many senators and representatives as possible, especially those in your area. These are some of the things we can ask our representatives to do:

(1) support the restoration of the democratically elected President and his administration to full power

(2) respect the social policies proposed by the majority of Haitian people,

(3) provide assurance that funds from the United States are used only to support democratic elections, not to run candidates (i.e. funds from National Endowment for Democracy, NED)

(4) regulate labor and environmental practices of U.S. businesses operating in Haiti

(5) provide due process for the Haitian refugees who are fleeing repression,

House/Senate Switchboard 202-224-3121

United States House of Representatives, Washington, DC 20515

United States Senate, Washington, DC 20510

Key Representatives: Lee Hamilton-IN, Charles Rangel-NY, Tony Hall-OH, Kweise-Mfume-MD.

Key Senators: Ted Kennedy-MA, Joseph Biden-DE, Christopher Dodd-CT, Carol Moseley-Braun, IL.

President: Bill Clinton, White House, Washington, DC 20500

b. Demand accurate media coverage. Write letters to the editor about the situation in Haiti. Also, write letters to your paper about their coverage, either praising them if it has been good or critiquing biases.

c. Teach Others!

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Resource Guide

Due to limited space, we include only a few of the most important titles with which to begin your study of Haiti. Many of these include extensive bibliographies. The intended audience of the books is indicated at the end of the description. Please note that in many cases the books written for adults are also very appropriate for high school students.

Fiction

Endore, G. (1991). *Babouk*. N.Y.: Monthly Review. Novel about the slave revolution. Forward by Jamaica Kincaid. Secondary and adult.

Roumain, J. (1944). *Masters of the Dew*. London: Heinemann Inc.. A classic Haitian novel. Source: Heinemann. Adult.

Temple, F. (1992). *Taste of Salt: A Story of Modern Haiti*. N.Y.: HarperTrophy. This powerful novel for upper elementary and junior high is set shortly after the election of Aristide. Tells the story of two 17-year-olds caught up in Haiti's struggle for democracy. Source: Teaching for Change, $4. Upper Elem. and Secondary.

Turenne des Pres, F. (1994). *Children of Yayoute, Folktales of Haiti*. NY: Universe Publishing. Folk tales and picture book for all ages.

Wolkstein, D. (1980). *The Magic Orange Tree and Other Haitian Folktales*. NY: Alfred Knopf. Folk tales for all ages.

Non-Fiction

Aristide, J.-B. (1990). *In the Parish of the Poor: Writings from Haiti*. N.Y.: Orbis Books. Essays by Jean-Bertrand Aristide. Adult.

Barry, T.; Wood, B; & Preusch, D. (1984). *The Other Side of Paradise: Foreign Control in the Caribbean*. N.Y.: Grove. Overview of the region focusing on corporate control of resources. Adult.

Courlander, H. (1960). *The Drum and the Hoe: Life and Lore of the Haitian People*. Berkeley: University of California Press. A comprehensive source of information on Haitian beliefs, folklore, spirituality, dance, songs, games, and proverbs. Adult.

DeWind, J. & D.Kinley. (1986). *Aiding Migration: The Impact of International Development Assistance in Haiti*. N.Y.: Columbia University. Analyzes Haiti's political economy and the impact of development model imposed by the U.S. Agency for International Development. Adult.

Donahue, D. & Flowers, N. (1992). *Haitian Refugees and Human Rights: Activities for the Classroom*. Amnesty International. $2. Amnesty, Educators Network Contact, 53 W. Jackson, Room 1162, Chicago, IL 60604, (312) 427-2060. Grades 7-12.

Farmer, P. (1994). *The Uses of Haiti*. ME: Common Courage. The history of Haiti, the popular movement, life stories of three Haitians and an analysis of commonly held myths about Haiti. Beautifully written. Adult.

Golden, R. et al. (1991). *Dangerous Memories: Invasion and Resistance Since 1492*. Chicago: Chicago Religious Task Force on Central America. History of the conquest in the Americas. Lots of primary sources. $10 from NECA. Secondary.

James, C.L.R. (1989). 2nd ed. *The Black Jacobins*. N.Y.: Random House. Classic account of the Haitian Revolution of 1791-1803. Adult.

Lawless, R. (1992). *Haiti's Bad Press*. VT: Schenkman Books. Documents the long history of racist bias against Haiti by the media and the United States and French governments. Adult.

Lawyers Committee for Human Rights. *Haiti: A Human Rights Nightmare*. 330 Seventh Ave, NY, NY 10001. (212) 629-6170. Report. $8 + postage. Adult.

Métraux, A. (1959). *Voodoo in Haiti*. N.Y.:Schocken Books. An authoritative analysis of vodou by a respected scholar. Adult.

Ridgeway, R. (Ed.) (1994). *The Haiti Files: Decoding the Crisis*. Washington, D.C.: Essential Books/Azul Editions. Drawing together reports, original documents, secret memos, and testimony, this book addresses the current crisis in Haiti and places it in the context of the long-standing U.S. role in Haiti's political and economic life. Adult.

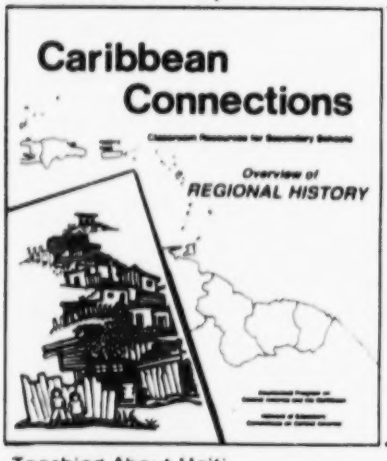
Sunshine, C. (1991). *Caribbean Connections: Overview of Regional History*. DC: EPICA/NECA. Highly acclaimed collection of fiction, non-fiction, interviews, and poetry. Source: Teaching for Change/NECA. Secondary.

Sunshine, C. (1988). *Caribbean: Survival, Struggle and Sovereignty*. DC: EPICA. Overview of Caribbean history, politics and culture. Adult.

Trouillot, M. (1990). *Haiti: State Against Nation*. N.Y.: Monthly Review Press. Examines the origins of the repressive Haitian state and the mechanisms through which the Duvaliers held power. Adult.

Wilentz, A. (1989). *The Rainy Season: Haiti Since Duvalier*. N.Y.: Touchstone/Simon and Schuster. Reads like a historical novel. Great background for teachers, excerpts can be used with students. Adult

Yoder, C. (Ed.) (1992). *Faces: Special Issue on Haiti*. NH: Cobblestone. History, art and culture. Order from Faces, 7 School St, Peterborough, NH 03458. Grades 4-7.



Caribbean Connections
Puerto Rico, Jamaica and Overview of Regional History

Each illustrated book brings Caribbean voices to the classroom through fiction, oral history, interviews, drama and songs. Lesson plans included. Excellent for secondary schools, colleges, and community groups. Send purchase order or check for $15 each (except Overview $18.95) payable to NECA (includes postage) to:
NECA 1118 22nd Street, NW
Washington, DC 20037
A publication of NECA and EPICA.

Videos

The prices listed include postage.

Bitter Cane. Award winning documentary of Haitian history from 1804 through early 1980s. Cinema Guild, 1697 Broadway Suite 506, New York, NY 10019, (800) 723-5522. Rental: $125. Or check major video stores.

Black Dawn. Award-winning animated film (w/study guide) tells the story of Haiti's revolutionary past through paintings of Haitian artists. In French, Creole or English. 20 min. $35.50. Schenkman Books, 118 Main Street, Rochester, VT 05767, (802) 767-3702.

Haiti: Killing the Dream. Powerful documentary on the history and current situation. Interviews with President Aristide, clergy, cross section of Haitian people, military junta, U.S. State Department and more. Ideal for schools. 60 min. $25. Crowing Rooster Arts, PO Box 1944, Canal St Station, NY, NY 10013, (212) 431-7408.

Haitian Pilgrimage. Traces journey of a Haitian-American family from Boston back to their roots in Haiti. Includes glimpses of a Vodou ritual, interviews with President Aristide, and more. Critiques myths about Vodou. 27 min. $27.50. Same distributor as **Black Dawn** above.

The Other Haiti. Documents the emergence of a national movement of peasants. $60/private, $120/institutional use. Ciné Soleil, 648 Broadway #502, NY, NY 10012, (212) 505-1731.

Organizations

Amnesty International, 322 8th Ave., New York, NY 10001. (212) 807-8400. Publish human rights reports and organize letter writing campaigns.

Center for International Policy, 1755 Massachusetts Ave. NW, Suite 312 Washington, DC 20036. (202) 232-3317.

Clergy and Laity Concerned (CALC), 340 Mead Road, Decatur, GA 30030, (404) 377-1983.

Ecumenical Program on Central America and the Caribbean (EPICA) 1470 Irving St., NW Washington, DC 20010. (202) 332-0292. Co-publishers of the Caribbean Connections classroom series. Also published: *Haiti: Cry for Justice* (Fall 1993) 16pp $1.50; *Beyond the Mountains, More Mountains: Haiti Faces the Future*, (Fall, 1994) 36pp, $3.50. Add $1 each for shipping. Bulk discounts available.

Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting (FAIR), 130 West 25th Street, NY, NY 10001, (212) 633-6700. Provide critical analysis of television and print news in monthly journal, *Extra*. Great classroom resource.

Haitian Information Bureau, c/o Lynx Air, PO Box 407139, Ft. Lauderdale FL 33340. An alternative news agency based in Port-au-Prince which publishes the biweekly *Haiti Info*. Covers the news often ignored by the mainstream press—the work of rural and grassroots organizations, human rights reports and analysis. Subscriptions: Individuals: $30/mail or $20/E-mail; Organizations: $80/mail or $70/E-mail.

Lambi Fund, PO Box 18955, Washington, DC 20036, (202) 833-3713. Promotes the social and economic empowerment of the Haitian people by supporting projects for leadership development, literacy and community advocacy. All programs are conceived, planned and implemented by the Haitian people themselves.

Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, 330 Seventh Ave, NY, NY 10001. (212) 629-6170. Publish reports, such as *Paper Laws, Steel Bayonets: Breakdown of the Rule of Law in Haiti*.

Mouvman Peyizan Papay: Education and Development Fund (MPP-EDF), 25 West St 2nd Floor, Boston, MA 02111, (617) 542-1140. Coalition of exiled members of the Haitian grassroots peasants' movement and North Americans providing direct support for peasant projects controlled by the grassroots movement in Haiti. Publish newsletter and coordinate delegations.

National Coalition for Haitian Refugees, 275 7th Avenue, NY, NY 10001. (212) 337-0005. Advocates for Haitian refugees and for human rights in Haiti. Write for free subscription to the newsletter, *HaitiInsight*.

National Labor Committee Education Fund in Support of Worker and Human Rights in Central America, 15 Union Square, New York, NY 10003, (212) 242-0700. Publish detailed reports on labor conditions in Haiti and US/Haiti trade. Make recommendations for actions that union local's can take with regards to US foreign policy in Central America and the Caribbean.

Pax Christi USA, 348 East 10th St., Erie, PA 16503. (814) 453-4955. Publish human rights reports.

Quixote Center/Haiti Reborn, PO Box 5206, Hyattsville, MD 20782. (301) 699-0042. Organize campaigns regarding US policy. Publish a press kit with background and list of speakers.

Voices for Haiti, PO Box 57438, Washington, DC 20036. (202) 338-8353. Campaigns for a just U.S. policy towards Haiti. Coordinates local and national actions. Good source for ideas about current actions that you can organize in your community.

Washington Office on Haiti, 110 Maryland Ave. NE, Wash, DC. (202) 543-7095. Publish human rights reports and Urgent Action appeals. News clipping service also available.

Sources for Books

Request free catalogues from the distributors listed below.

Africa World Press, 15 Industry Court, Trenton, NJ 08638. Tremendous collection of books on Africa and all the countries in the diaspora.

Haitiana Publications, 224-08 Linden Blvd., Cambria Heights, NY 11411, (718) 978-6323. Books on Haiti in Creole, French and English. Textbooks in Creole.

Heinemann, 361 Hanover St., Portsmouth, NH 03801. (800) 541-2086. Request catalogue on African and Caribbean literature.

Monthly Review Press, 122 West 27th St. NY, NY 10001, (212) 691-2555.

Teaching for Change, NECA, 1118 22nd St, NW, Washington, DC 20037 (202) 429-0137. Catalogue of materials on teaching K-12 from a multicultural, anti-racist and critical perspective. Includes other titles in the *Caribbean Connections* series.

Haitian Proverbs

Photo: © 1992 Mev Puleo/ Impact

Sè lè koulèv mouri, ou konn longè li.
Only when the serpent dies
do you know its true length.

Bwa pi wo di li wè, grenn pwenmennen di li wè pase l.
The high tree says he sees far, the walking (traveling) seed says he sees farther.

Yon sèl dwèt pa manje kalalou.
A single finger can't eat okra.

Bèl antèman pa di paradi.
A beautiful burial does not guarantee heaven.

Konstitisyon se papye, bayonèt se fè.
The constitution is made of paper, but the bayonet is made of steel.

Ròch nan dlo pa konnen mizè ròch nan solèy.
Rocks in the water don't know the misery of rocks in the sun.

Sa je pa wè kè pa tounen.
What the eye doesn't see,
doesn't move the heart.

Kay koule tronpe solèy, men li pa tronpe lapli.
The house that leaks can fool the sun,
but it can't fool the rain.

Dèyè mòn gen mòn.
Behind the mountains, more mountains.

These are just a few of the hundreds of Haitian proverbs.